Dungeon®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1992 ISSUE #33
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COVER: The old bridge to the haunted island doesn't look very sturdy, but that's the least of your troubles. A dreaded oni bars the way in Jon Fraze's cover painting for "Mad Gyoji."

Any Eccentricity Will Do

Barbara has written DUNGEON® editorials for long enough. Since she's away on a brief and well-deserved vacation, I'm taking this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Wolfgang Baur, and I'm the new assistant editor of DUNGEON Adventures (and editorial assistant for DRAGON® Magazine). When I heard about the job opening, I jumped at the chance and came up for a very friendly interview. I had no idea how well the staff was hiding its eccentricities.

Rumor has it that editors are an odd bunch. Rumor has it right. Maybe it's just a coincidence that this issue features an Oriental adventure, but I've noticed that the periodicals department at TSR is turning into Chop Sockey Theater. Both Barbara and Roger practice aikido, a defensive (ha!) Japanese martial art of throws, holds, and pins. Practice sessions take place on a padded mat, which gives you some idea of the amount of people-flinging involved. Roger and Barbara practice at the local YMCA at lunchtime and attend classes at night. First thing in the morning, they're comparing notes and practicing holds in Roger's crowded cubicle. If they offer to demonstrate *yonkyo* on you, I suggest you decline. *Yonkyo* is Japanese for "Vulcan nerve pinch," and it hurts.

I'm taking up tae kwon do for strictly defensive purposes.

Don't let anyone tell you that practicing a martial art is a job requirement here. It only seems like it. In fact, any eccentricity will do. Zeb Cook and other game designers fly stunt kites, weather permitting. In the summer, squads of people line up to convert the grassy field out back into an archery range. In the winter, people go out less and tend to burrow into their offices and cubicles. Office decoration tends to the bizarre, including giant robot collections, swords, masks, giant cartoon blow-ups, chain mail and fur clothing, antlers serving as toilet-paper holders, and huge purple crayons.

I've got a few quirks of my own, but I'll restrain myself and just list the editorial ones. There are several pet projects that I've always wanted to see in DUNGEON Adventures. Feel free to send in proposals on all of the following: DARK SUN™ adventures; something playable with gnomes (not gnomoi!); an adventure centered around a medieval craft guild and its

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There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root.

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

THAT ISLAND CHARM

BY M. S. ROONEY, PATRICK CARPENTER, AND GREG GLIEDMAN

First, your ship sinks. Then things *really* go bad.

Artwork by Bob Klasnich

At any distance greater than 10', Patrick Carpenter is likely to be mistaken for a beholder because of his false central eye and the rhizome growth atop his head. M. S. Rooney is a small, doglike scavenger found in warm regions. He appears here because of a magical bag of tricks. *The most powerful and respected of the designers is Greg Gliedman. This generally reclusive creature inhabits only out-of-the-way places. Unlike Carpenter and Rooney, Gliedman does not hurl rocks.*

"That Island Charm" is an AD&D® adventure for 4-8 player characters of levels 7-12 (about 55 total levels). At least one elf, one ranger, and one spellcaster are recommended. As caution and thought on the part of the adventurers is central to successfully confronting their formidable adversaries, players of the "hack-and-slay" persuasion can very quickly find themselves, quite literally, to be fish bait. Because of the importance of PC-NPC interaction and player initiative in determining the course of the plot, the DM should read the scenario thoroughly to role-play the various NPCs effectively and to keep the story moving smoothly.

The adventure is set on an uncharted semi-tropical atoll, several miles offshore of a port city that the PCs frequent. Thus, this adventure may easily begin in a city on the Sea of Fallen Stars in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting or in a port on the Azure Sea in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting. The city is referred to as Port Naliam, but this name may be freely modified with few repercussions on the adventure.

The climax of the adventure occurs in a partially submerged cavern, so the DM should be familiar with rules for aquatic adventuring, as detailed on page 79 of the AD&D 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide.* Additionally, the DM should peruse the *Monstrous Compendium* entries for the morkoth and marid.

This adventure hinges on the *charm* abilities of the morkoth, which are somewhat nebulously defined in its *Monstrous Compendium* entry. The authors of this scenario have interpreted the innate abilities of morkoth as being of a power above that of PC-accessible *charm* spells; it is similar to that of a vampire (see page 65 of the AD&D 1st Edition *DMG*). These levels of *charm* power are more loosely differentiated in the 2nd Edition rules (see

page 64 of the 2nd Edition *DMG*), so individual interpretations may vary from those presented herein. In no case are the *charmed* NPCs or PCs mindless automatons, but they have been instructed by their masters to act in certain ways. As always, the decisions of the DM should prevail over any rule-lawyer nitpicking or our own humble opinions.

Beginning the Adventure

The DM should arrange for the PCs to arrive in the coastal city of Port Naliam, doubtless drawn by the opulent and glamorous lifestyle of the marine mercenary. While the party is in town (ideally while near the docks), read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The afternoon's cool sea wind wafts around you, bringing with it the scents of the piers and wharfs of the city. As alluring as the odor of decaying fish and unwashed sailors is, you manage to turn toward the entrance of the Swaggerin' Shark Tavern, a dingy establishment that attracts flotsam such as yourselves. The barkeep, Thersites Coldguts, scowls at your entry and curses under his breath.

Allow the party to interact with Coldguts or any of the other mongrel-like patrons of the tavern. Even if the party has never been in the tavern before, the proprietor treats them as if they were lifelong customers, so long as they tip well.

After a few moments of what passes for small talk in the Swaggerin' Shark (perhaps discussing the party's latest misadventures), Coldguts lowers his head conspiratorially and whispers to the adventurers.

> "Remember the disappearin' ships I mentioned to ya last time ya dragged yerselves in here—the *Shamrock*, the *Admiral Andres*—no, I see ya don't. Well, these ships have been vanishin' off the main tradin' lanes to the southwest. It's been makin' news round here on the docks, seein' as how they was loaded with silver an' such. Course, nobody's taken a mind to 'vestigatin' it, as ships sink every so often anyhow. But the big news jus' happened. The most recent boat to disappear came back!
>
> "What's more, the crew of this 'un sez thet the other ships all wrecked on a small reefed isle, where the cargo is jes' lyin' offshore waitin' to be picked up. The crew of this returned ship, the *MacLean*, needs help to salvage the cargo and is willing to hire a party to protect them from the natives on the island—some ornery ogres or such.
>
> "Ordinary-like, I wouldn't mention this kinda small news to big-time 'venturer-types like yerselves, but the cap'n of the *MacLean* tol' me he was a-lookin' fer powerful folk to insure 'complete success'—that's what he said. He's willin' ta give up a third share of the salvage, too. I think they're still at Skull Pier, if nobody else has signed on yet.
>
> "Easy plunder an' poundin' the heads of brainless ogres sounds like yer kinda' hobby, so I told the cap'n ya might be a-comin'." Coldguts pauses, as if awaiting some reaction. He then says, "You know, it was awful nice o' me to tell ya this."

Coldguts expects a tip of at least 3 gp for his information. However, as he forgot to withhold the location of the ship, Coldguts may be snubbed with little consequence. If questioned further, he can supply the party with little else in the way of useful information, except that the captain of the *MacLean* looked rather tired.

The party should make their way to Skull Pier, where they find a battered sea vessel busily being prepared for an ocean voyage. This is the *MacLean*, a merchant cog out of Alir (an island town to the southwest), with two masts, one deck, square sails, and a crew of 14 humans. Her current cargo capacity is 150 tons, and she usually carries western silver into Naliam and nearby port markets.

The captain, one Asamin Terrence, is a sailor of many years' experience. He is businesslike and nondescript but has obviously spent a great deal of time in the sun and at sea. He can be found on the pier, observing repairs to his ship. If approached, he greets the adventurers warmly and offers them positions as bodyguard-salvagers, with a 30% share in profits recovered. The remainder of the haul will be divided among the crew. If the party is unsatisfied with this amount, Captain Terrence can (with moderate difficulty) be bargained to as much as 50%. He expects to retrieve about 50,000 gp value from the wrecks of the other two ships.

Terrence also warns the PCs of the "savage island ogres" who thwarted his earlier attempts at recovery. If the adventurers accept his offer, they are welcomed aboard and given the captain's quarters for the duration of the voyage. The *MacLean* sets sail at dusk.

For the Dungeon Master

Although Coldguts's information was true to the best of his (rather limited) knowledge, something considerably more sinister than a mere salvage operation and a handful of ogres is afoot.

Two months ago, a marid, searching for the lost treasure of an ancient elemental prince, combed the ocean waters near Port Naliam and happened upon a small atoll just off the main trade routes. The atoll supported a small village of primitive ogres and thriving vegetation, owing to an undersea thermal vent near the center of the island.

The vent, surrounded by half-submerged caverns, attracted the marid's attention. At the center of the tunnels he discovered a morkoth, which promptly (and luckily) managed to *charm* the marid. Intrigued by the possibilities made available by the genie, the morkoth formulated an ambitious plan to expand its dietary intake.

Using the marid to scout the vicinity of the isle, the morkoth discovered the extent of human sea traffic in the area and ordered the marid to bring it a vessel. Utilizing its *wall of fog* and water controlling abilities, the genie veered the *Shamrock* off course, wrecking it on the reef surrounding the atoll. The survivors were washed ashore by the marid, who greeted the sailors in *polymorphed* form. Posing as a longtime castaway on the isle, the marid lured the sailors into the caverns, where they were easily *charmed* by the morkoth.

The castaways were then returned to the surface and encouraged to build a ramshackle village while awaiting the morkoth's hunger. To avoid conflict with the native ogres, the marid destroyed the ogre settlement and brought their bodies to his aquatic master. One ogre survives, unbeknownst to the marid, and remains in hiding near the ruined ogre camp.

After a few weeks, the marid again

set forth to ensnare a human vessel; this time he wrecked the trading caravel *Admiral Andres*. Among the *Andres*'s crew was a group of four mercenary adventurers, including an elven fighter/thief named Endoriana who resisted the morkoth's *charm*. Caught at an obvious disadvantage against the morkoth, she feigned being *charmed* until an opportunity to escape presented itself.

The elf is currently entrenched in the least-accessible portion of the island, surrounded by dense foliage and self-laid traps. The marid and morkoth are unaware of her absence, not being given to taking precise tallies of their prisoners.

The morkoth has been careful to periodically renew the potency of the *charm* spell over its servants, particularly the marid, with whom the morkoth keeps in daily contact. Concerned about the possibility of a search party discovering the isle, the morkoth conceived of a variation upon its original plan. The morkoth instructed the marid to attract air-breathers of reasonable power to guard the surface isle against possible discovery and intervention by the outside world. The marid, judging from past experiences, interpreted this command to mean he should lure adventurers to the island.

A week ago, the marid used his *lower water* ability to ground the cog *MacLean* on the island with a minimum of damage to the ship. After the marid *charmed* the crew, the sailors were set to the task of repairing their ship. The morkoth ordered the *MacLean* and its crew to return to Port Naliam, providing a false story about treasure retrieval and dangerous ogres to bait a party of mercenaries into the morkoth's feeding pool.

Adventure Key

From the departure of the *MacLean* from Port Naliam, events proceed along a fairly brisk timeline that will likely culminate in a confrontation with the morkoth and marid in the partially submerged caverns beneath the center of the atoll. The course of the adventure can be organized into five sections. The party will have the best chance of success by following this course, but as alternative decisions are possible, a number of outcomes are detailed in the text.

First, the PCs journey to the island. The trip ends abruptly when the ship is wrecked on the atoll by the marid. The adventurers encounter and interact with the inhabitants of a makeshift village of castaways from previous wrecks. After discovering various flaws in the castaways' stories, the PCs should be drawn to examine the remains of the ogre settlement, where they can meet and perhaps talk with the surviving ogre.

Next, the PCs should come upon the un*charmed* but initially hostile Endoriana, who can inform the party of the true nature of the island. This knowledge should lead the adventurers to confront the morkoth and marid in the undersea caverns, concluding with the victory of the party and the escape of all concerned from the isle if the party wins the battle. The whole affair (from shipwreck to denouement) should ideally last no more than a game day or perhaps two.

1. The Voyage. The island is approximately two days' journey southwest of Port Naliam, just off one of the prime trading routes. Under the directions of the *charmed* crew of the *MacLean*, the voyage should progress without any difficulties. As most of the trip utilizes a commonly traveled sea lane, no waterborne encounters are included. Furthermore, after the first day, the ship is secretly trailed by the marid, who insures that the *MacLean* and its passengers face no trouble until they near the isle.

During the voyage, the crew is laconic but never unfriendly to the adventurers, almost always accommodating the desires of the PCs. Captain Terrence is the most voluble of a taciturn lot, but only if directly questioned. No one among the crew volunteers information unless asked.

Terrence runs a tight ship and can usually be found on the decks, supervising the sailors. If any of the PCs are particularly alert (though they should have little reason to be), they might note that Terrence gives no thought to exactly how the treasure will be salvaged and does not discuss the subject with the adventurers. If questioned, he avoids this topic, urging the PCs not to concern themselves. ("We'll work it out when we get there.")

If the PCs are curious, the DM can describe the Captain's daily schedule and allow them to draw their own conclusions. The crew has been ordered to be reticent but cooperative, and so will try to quietly avoid contact with the party.

After sunset the second day, Captain Terrence (following the morkoth's instructions) sails the vessel off the main route and toward the island. Hours later, near midnight, the marid summons several *walls of fog*, utterly obscuring vision on board. Simultaneously, the marid destroys the ship's rudder and begins pushing the *MacLean* faster on its course with strong jets of water.

The crewmembers remain calm and sit at their posts listlessly. If any PCs are awake and ask about the goings-on, Terrence calmly informs them, "We seem to have entered a bank of fog." The crew will assist the PCs however requested but seem oblivious to the weather, having been reassured by the morkoth that they will wash ashore safely, just as they did the first time they wrecked on the isle.

Anyone lowered near the water or those with good hearing can determine that the ship is moving very quickly. Only 2d10 rounds after the fog closes in, the ship smashes into the reef and the marid uses his great strength to tear the hull to bits. The PCs may take whatever precautions they can in one round before the deck beneath them splinters asunder. Sleeping PCs are rudely awakened by a sudden rush of ocean water as the cabin crumbles into pieces around them. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> It is with some dismay that you note the deck of the *MacLean* heave apart and hurl you into the sea. You fall gracelessly into the ocean and are preparing to survive in some manner when the mast and a good-sized portion of the deck collapse on top of you. Gurgling and thrashing about as you normally do when drowning, you frantically attempt to perform some final heroic actions.

Allow the PCs to take whatever desperate measures they wish, but note that spell-casting is impossible in these conditions. For whatever PCs remain in or on the water (presumably the majority of the group), read the following text:

> The ocean seems unpleasantly alive with a powerful current pulling you

beyond the reef. You struggle to keep above water until a great surge brings your feet into contact with silt. Another wave heaves your sodden carcasses ashore. You lie still in the dark, unfashionably covered with sand and kelp. Then you hear the unhappy groans of your comrades and realize that you weren't so miraculously lucky after all.

Unless PCs actively deny life-preserving activities (for example, a PC steadfastly maintains that the wreck is an illusion and ardently inhales seawater), all aboard the ship survive the experience thoroughly soaked but otherwise unharmed. Those who dropped or lost possessions (such as heavy armor) in the wreck find their items on the beach, pushed ashore by the marid's efforts. Paper items such as scrolls and books suffer considerable water damage unless somehow protected or sealed.

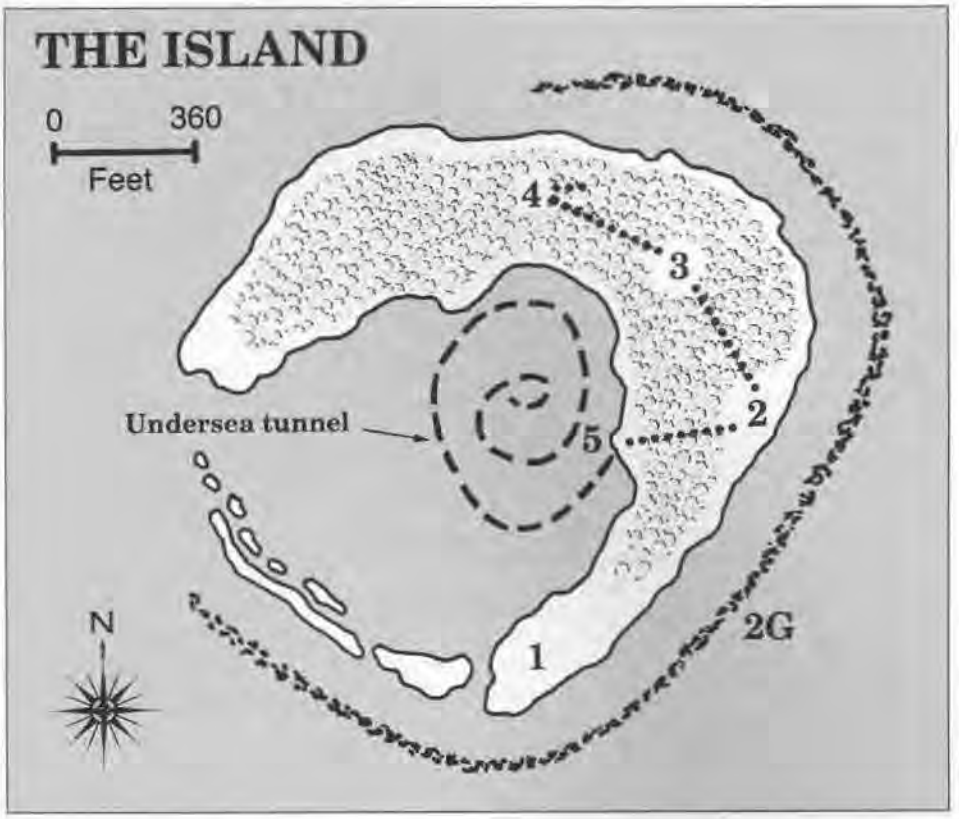
Those headstrong enough to have attempted to breathe underwater without magical assistance will be similarly beached, although quick resuscitation might be necessary, as they have been submerged for two rounds (see the 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook*, page 122).

Ask the PCs for their actions after washing ashore. A preliminary search finds all hands of the *MacLean* have survived the wreck and are on the beach, dazed but still fairly calm. Picking through the large amount of wreckage strewn along the shore reveals most of the contents of the ship's hold, including water-logged rations. If the PCs wonder at this freakishly strong current, let them chalk it up to DM benevolence. A *detect magic* spell, however, will indicate the marid's water control for three rounds after the PCs wash ashore.

After the PCs have gathered their wits about them and are beginning to wonder "What next?" continue with the following text:

You are beginning to reconsider the worth of this entire enterprise when you hear a call of greeting. A low voice reeking of authority and command sounds slowly in the night, coming from a torch-bearing group of sober-looking men walking down the beach toward you.

"Hail, strangers. I am Captain Johansen, late of the *Admiral Andres*, and a sworn officer of the Lord Mayor of Port Naliam. I am the acting lord of this island domain, and as such command you to identify yourselves on pain of swift justice. Please do not be rash."



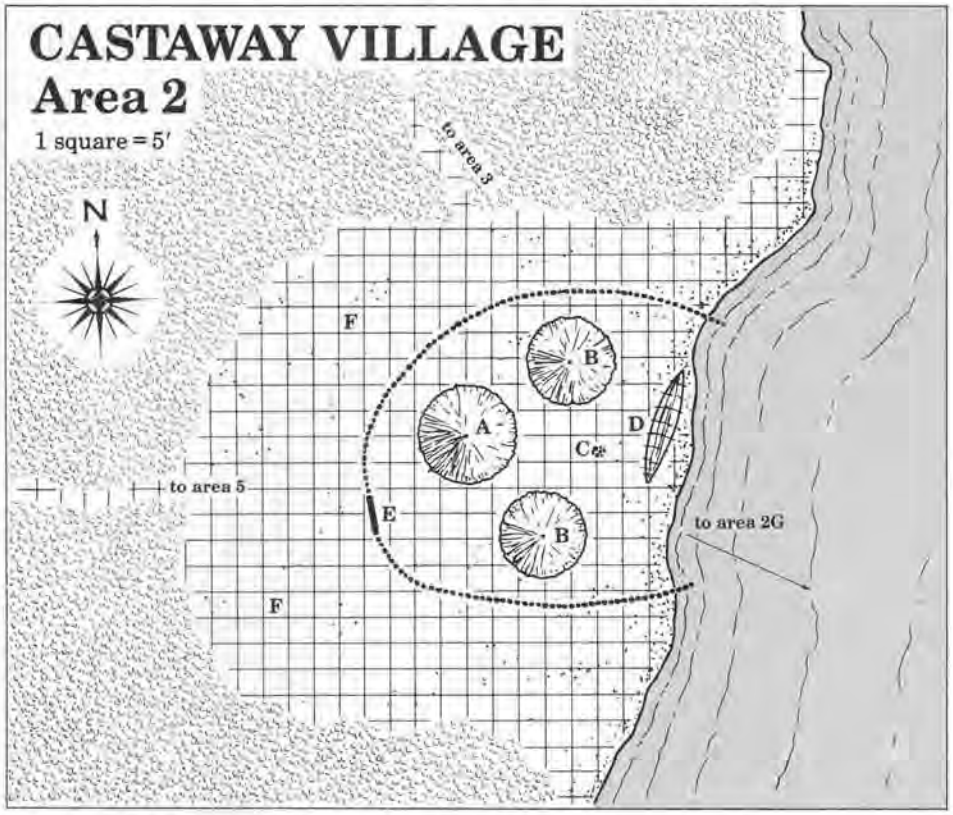
If the PCs keep quiet, Captain Terrence identifies himself and his crew. Johansen is a grim man, used to giving harsh commands and to seeing them obeyed without question. He is not loud or brash, preferring to use low, icy monotones and silent stares to intimidate. He was never a pleasant person to begin with, and the marid has seen fit to leave him in charge of the castaways (he keeps them from wandering about and causing trouble). As soon as he realizes the PCs and the sailors are shipwrecked, he expects immediate compliance and subordination from all concerned.

Johansen listens to whatever the PCs have to say and then orders everyone to return with him to the settlement, carrying as much of value from the *MacLean* as possible. If the PCs ask questions, Johansen bares his teeth in what passes as a smile and says, "I don't answer questions, so don't ask them. If you like talk, you can wait till you get to the village and jabber with the Old Man. If you enjoy living, come with us."

Johansen turns from the PCs and heads the group as it moves north. One of Johansen's underlings grumbles about the Captain "going easy on these cast-off weaklings" and gestures everyone to follow. The soldiers, like their leader, are generally large, tall, and thoroughly unlikable. All are *charmed*. The crew of the *MacLean* will follow, and the PCs appear to have nowhere else to go. The soldiers lead the castaways to area 2.

Captain Gustav Johansen: AL LE; AC 7; MV 9; F7; hp 59; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; SA bastard sword specialist; S 17, D 12, C 16, I 12, W 13, Ch 4; ML 18; studded leather armor, *bastard sword +2, dagger of venom*.

First Officer William Briden: AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; F5; hp 48; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA cutlass specialist; S 18/94, D 7, C 18, I 9, W 8, Ch 13; ML 18; chain mail, knife, *cutlass*



+1/+2 vs. magic-using and enchanted creatures, throwing axe, lantern, flask of oil.

Will is Johansen's yes-man, enforcer, and bully. He especially dislikes "smarty-pants" wizards or other scholar-types.

Soldiers (6): AL LN; AC 7; MV 9; F1; hp 6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA specialization (see below); ML 18; studded leather armor, long sword, light crossbow, 10 quarrels.

Two of these soldiers are crossbow specialists, the others are sword aficionados. They are a grumpy and mean lot.

No experience points should be awarded for killing these NPCs. All the castaways seem to be working together for some form of common ("lawful") benefit, though they have been *charmed* and are not entirely in command of their actions.

2. The Castaway Village. Captain Johansen and company silently bring the PCs and the other shipwreck survivors from the desolate beach where they crashed (area 1 on "The Island" map) to the makeshift village (area 2) where the survivors of previous wrecks currently dwell. As the adventurers approach the village, read or paraphrase the following text:

> As you round a patch of dense tropical plant life, you see the wavering lights of several prominently placed torches illuminating a short bamboo stockade. Beyond this, the thatched palm roofs of a number of huts can be dimly discerned. As you draw nearer, a crude gate swings open in the shakily built wall, and your military escort leads you into the village.

The "Castaway Village" map shows the layout of the ramshackle settlement. It is about 1:00 A.M. as the PCs enter the village, and no one is awake except the gate-keeping crossbowman and Old Man Moran, the *polymorphed* guise of the marid Al-Azif.

Johansen and his company guide the survivors of the *MacLean* to the main building (area 2A), where they can sleep for the rest of the night. Old Man Moran greets the PCs and urges them to rest until morning, when matters can be more readily discussed.

If the PCs are suspicious or cautious enough to keep their own night watch, the NPCs will happily accommodate them. Old Man Moran retires for the night after making the others comfortable in their tropic island nest. Johansen and the soldiers depart for their own quarters. Nothing untoward will happen to the PCs during the night, and they may enjoy a safe and tranquil rest.

The next morning, read the following to the players:

> Your pleasant dreams are brought to an abrupt end as the ridiculously wrinkled visage of some decrepit creature leers into your blinking vision like some ersatz jack-in-the-box. With entirely too much ease, you identify this pruned face as belonging to Old Man Moran, who resembles a stock character in some melodramatic, indigestion-conceived dream you had last night. Unfortunately, the kelp in your sand-encrusted hair helps you recall that this brave expedition is all too real.
>
> Old Man Moran wobbles about, waving his spindly arms in an upward gesture. Your fleeting hopes that he is a mute but kindly old man are dashed as he begins to speak in a wavering, reedy voice. "Wake up, wake up, my new little friends! You must meet with your fellows outside now!"
>
> You are still trying to figure out why a 5'-tall man called you little when you notice the presence of several dozen persons standing just outside the entrance of the hut. The crew of the *MacLean* is among them.

The castaways stand expectantly, awaiting the PCs. As soon as the adventurers leave the hut, a corpulent man with light hair greets them warmly and introduces himself as Captain Hale of the *Shamrock,* out of Alir, and delivers the following rambling tale. Allow the PCs to freely interact with Hale and the others. All of the surviving crews of the three wrecked vessels are present, although they have little to add to Hale's story.

> "Well, it's good to meet you, friends. I've already told our story to Cap'n Terrence, but we figured to let you get all the rest you wanted after last night. Now, you already heard about our two ships—the *Shamrock* and the

Admiral Andres—getting wrecked on that nasty reef offshore. Well, it turns out that your boy Terry, here, didn't look around on the island much after bumping into some of those ogres, so he just assumed that we all went down with the ship. But the thing is, we didn't!"

All too briefly, Hale pauses in his blustering narrative. Seeing that the expected guffaws and knee-clapping are not forthcoming, he resumes his tale.

"You see, most of us managed to swim ashore after the wreck, and we found Old Man Moran had been livin' here for years, hunting the ogres. So we settled down here in this clearing and built us a couple of roofs to keep out the rain. We were about ready to start puttin' together a boat to get us on out of here when another fog storm came and wrecked the *Andres*. That was a few weeks ago, and now we're all here together.

"Cap'n Johansen put together this wall to keep the ogres out. Nasty folk them ogres—it's been them stopping us from finishing our escape boat. But now that you guys are here, I don't think we have anything to worry about." Hale and many others smile happily at the prospect of escape.

Now is the time for the PCs to be inquisitive and talkative. The castaways cheerfully answer PC queries to the best of their knowledge, with the following general amendments to the truth (as laid down by their masters):

—The ogres are aggressive and antagonistic. They come from the caverns below the isle. They have killed many of the castaways and have disrupted the construction of escape vessels.

—There are no other intelligent inhabitants of the isle (beyond the ogres). No one who has gone into the caverns has ever returned.

—Old Man Moran has been on the isle for many years and is an absolutely trustworthy person.

After listening to the various stories of the castaways and examining the area, the PCs may notice several discrepancies between the account and actuality. For example, the shoddy condition of the walls clashes with the purported ogre menace, as does the condition of the escape vessel (see area 2D) and the general absence of injuries or corpses (despite the supposed fatalities) in the village, not to mention the lack of ogre footprints in the area.

PCs raising these or other points (such as why the ogres live in human-sized tunnels), or questioning the existence of the actual ogre settlement will be told how clever and deceitful the nasty ogres are. If the PCs point out absolute contradictions (such as the construction of Old Man Moran's hut; see area 2A), the castaways can only scratch their heads in confusion.

A *detect lie* spell or similar divinations indicate that all of the above bits of information are fabrications, told to the villagers by the morkoth or the marid. A *detect charm* spell reveals the altered states of the sailors. Needless to say, do not suggest either spell to the players. Let them examine the facts and draw their own conclusions.

Immediately following their chat with Captain Hale, the PCs are free to mingle with the castaways and to roam the village and island.

2A. Central Hut. This is the large building where Old Man Moran and the crew of *MacLean* take shelter. It is a circular structure akin to a raised tepee. The wooden roof is shaped like a cone, with a central opening 25' above the fire pit. If asked why such a large structure was built for one person (as the previous castaways should not have expected the *MacLean* to arrive), the sailors shrug ignorantly. Old Man Moran says it's his home, built when he retired here years ago. Knowledgeable examination of the construction will show that the building is not more than a month old (carpentry skill will easily reveal this). Indeed, if specifically asked, crew members of the *Shamrock* will recall building it at Moran's request.

Old Man Moran is the false identity that the marid Al-Azif has assumed to interact with and to control the castaways as the morkoth's intermediary. If asked about his history, Moran tells of his long career as a hunter and traveler, and of his eventual retirement to this uncharted isle to escape the confines of civilization. Al-Azif based the character of Moran on an obnoxious human who once attempted to slay the marid. He can play Moran convincingly for any length of time.

While the PCs are present, Old Man Moran can be found here at all times. Ordinarily, the marid takes time out to serve his master regular meals (and to submit to a renewal of the *charm*), but today his task is to introduce the party to the morkoth, which he will try to do as detailed in area 2G. Moran detects as both magical and *charmed* if such divinations are utilized. If attacked, he flees on foot into the cavern (area 5), intending to be followed. For the marid's statistics, see area 5.

2B. Crew Quarters. These two buildings are identical but slightly smaller replicas of the central hut. The northern domicile houses the remaining crew of the *Shamrock* (three sailors and Captain Hale) as well as the military and mercenary complement of the *Admiral Andres* (six soldiers, two officers, and two mercenary adventurers). The southern hut contains the rest of the crew of the *Andres* (12 sailors). Both huts are well stocked with native edibles, including a variety of fruits and cured meat.

If the PCs question the inhabitants of these huts, they can verify the storm conditions which brought the sailors to the island as being identical to those experienced by the PCs. The castaways can tell the PCs that the wrecks of the two ships lie near the shore where the PCs were grounded. The ogres and the wrecks will be blamed for the heavy losses of life among the crews, although astute PCs might notice the complete absence of burial sites near the village.

PCs examining the behavior and mood of the castaways can note that all seem oddly complacent about their predicament, especially in light of the heavy casualties suffered. Inquires about this odd state of mind are met with remarks about how comforting it is to have powerful ogre exterminators present on the island.

The two remaining mercenary adventurers, Dolopion and Andronicus, will mention their backgrounds if asked directly; see Endoriana's story in area 4 for an unaltered version of their account. The mercenaries say that their two missing members died in the wreck, and no hint will be made of their journey into the cavern. If the other castaways are separately and specifically questioned, they can recall that all four adventurers, including an attractive female elf, were washed ashore alive. The absence of the other two mercenaries will be blamed on the ogres.

Captain Hale: AL LG; AC 8; MV 12; F3; hp 21; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by

weapon type; SA club specialist; S 16, D 9, C 15, I 10, W 11, Ch 15; ML 18; club, *hat of protection +2*. Hale is a large, friendly man, if a bit of a fool. He deeply mourns the drowning of his first officer ("My little buddy!").

Dolopion of Skamandros: AL CG; AC −1; MV 12; C8; hp 47; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 13, D 11, C 15, I 12, W 16, Ch 14; ML 18; *bronze plate mail +2, shield +2, morning star +1, staff of withering* (five charges), *ring of warmth*. Spells: *bless, command* (×2), *faerie fire, sanctuary, heat metal, hold person* (×2), *obscurement, silence 15' radius*.

The company cleric of the mercenary adventurers, Dolopion cannot receive spells higher than second level until the morkoth's *charm* is lifted (his deity is aware of his altered mental state). He is middle-aged and a tiresome conversationalist, dwelling on the grimmer aspects of the afterlife.

Andronicus Decius Claius: AL CN; AC 0; MV 9; F8; hp 57; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type; SA battle axe specialist; S7, D 15, C 15, I 7 (10 without hat), W 4, Ch 7; ML 18; *full plate +1, large shield −1 missile attractor, battle axe +3, hat of stupidity*.

Decius is the new strong arm of the mercenary party, having recently joined them in Alir. He is crude, arrogant, and lecherous, having quickly earned the enmity of Endoriana before the *Andres* even left dock. He is also unwittingly carrying two *cursed* items, believing both to be potent defensive wards, and will certainly brag about them (among other things) if given half a chance.

Sailors (15): AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 18. The sailors have one short sword and dagger each.

2C. Water Source. A mound of small stones about a foot high marks the location of a spring from which the castaways draw fresh water. If anyone removes the top stone, water streams forth. Intrepid PCs who break up the mound of stones can find no natural source of this water—it simply wells up from the sand.

The water is created by the marid, and observant PCs can notice that Old Man Moran is always within 60' when the spring is utilized. Should clever PCs somehow distract Moran from the well, it will not function. Castaways confronted with this mystery will thank the gods for their kindness. ("And we just thought we were lucky!")

2D. Escape Ship. The partially completed hull of the castaways' escape vessel lies on the sandy beach here. It is a poorly built shamble of half-rotten wood and too few nails. Anyone with any construction-related proficiency who examines the craft can determine that this ship is not simply damaged or undersupplied: It is badly built. Even those without such skills can see the shabby state of the boat, but the castaways will claim that their efforts have been hampered by ogre attacks and poor working conditions.

2E. Wooden Barrier. This 7'-tall wooden wall is better built than the boat at area 2D, owing to the devotion to duty of Captain Johansen's soldiers. However, a PC with engineering skill can perceive that the wall could not possibly withstand even one ogre, much less a vicious tribe. Unskilled PCs looking closely at the wall can come to similar conclusions. The one gate is a simple affair made of bamboo and could be easily knocked out of place by anyone with a strength greater than 15.

2F. The Clearing. Beyond the wall lies a flat sandy clearing. Outside the cleared space, the area is overgrown with lush vegetation. Two trails exit the clearing, one heading due west toward the central sea inlet and the other heading northwest into the heart of the island.

The western trail appears to be relatively new, having been hacked through from the direction of the village a month or so ago. Man-sized footprints go back and forth along the trail in great number and frequency. The other trail is much older and is far less frequently used, although a large set of recently made tracks can be found in the dirt.

All of the above information can be gleaned by the successful use of tracking proficiency. The large tracks on the northwest trail are those of Kazir, the ogre survivor, who has been secretly watching the castaways. The western trail leads to the cavern opening (area 5), and the older path leads to the ogre settlement (area 3).

2G. Coral Reef. About 50 yards out to sea, a substantial coral reef circles the island. Due southeast of the village lie the wrecks of the *Shamrock and the Admiral Andres* under 30' of water. Both ships suffered extensive damage and are broken into several pieces. If an extensive underwater search is mounted by the PCs, the wreckage may be discovered, along with fragments of the *MacLean*. Nothing of value can be salvaged from the debris, for the marid has long since moved the contents of the ships' holds to the morkoth's cavern. Examination of the submerged wreckage suggests that a force substantially greater than running aground on a reef destroyed the ships. If asked, the castaways are greatly puzzled and suggest possible merrow involvement.

An Invitation to Lunch

After a few hours of exploration, Old Man Moran invites the PCs to lunch with the officers and mercenaries. The spring is utilized for water, and a hearty meal of boar and fruits is served. Allow the PCs to converse further if they wish. Immediately after the meal, Old Man Moran suggests a prompt attack against the ogre stronghold. Johansen, Briden, Decius, and Dolopion volunteer to accompany the party, as does Moran ("I've hunted many things in my day, kiddo.").

If the PCs agree, Moran and company lead the party along the western trail to the cavern opening (area 5). If the adventurers decline, they are scorned as cowards by the NPCs and receive much verbal abuse from Decius and Briden. Nonetheless, the expedition will not depart without them. Moran graciously gives the party as much time as they need but reminds them that until the ogres are defeated, escape will be difficult.

If the PCs quietly wander away from the village to explore on their own (even before the lunch), no one will take action, as the marid does not know that anyone else is on the island. When the PCs return to the village, they will again be invited to a meal and asked to attack the ogres. If the adventurers directly confront the castaways with knowledge of their deceptions, Moran orders everyone to savagely attack the party.

In the ensuing conflict, the PCs should have a clear advantage, so Moran (who will not assume his true form and will avoid direct combat) orders a general retreat after a few casualties. He dashes for the cavern, hoping the PCs will incautiously pursue.

If captured, Moran poses as a Circe-esque enchanter who has held the castaways prisoner on the island out of greed and antisocial tendencies. He surrenders himself and anyone still *charmed* as hostages (albeit reluctantly) and offers to take the party to the cavern, "where I keep my hoard." Moran attempts to lead the PCs into the central cavern, where the morkoth can try to *charm* or destroy the PCs as outlined in area 5.

It is possible that the PCs could innocently accept the castaways' story and stroll blithely into the jaws of the morkoth, especially if the players are accustomed to uncomplicated, implausible adventure hooks. Such PCs will probably die in the cavern. To forestall this, a benevolent DM might wish to draw the clues in the village more blatantly to the attention of the players. However, as this scenario was designed to surprise lazy or unthinking players, you may wish to remember that he who lives by the sword dies—often in an unappetizing manner.

3. The Ogre Settlement. Read or paraphrase the following material to the players if the PCs investigate the trail to the north.

> As you walk along the well-worn path leading north you notice dry gullies on either side of the trail. They are about 2' deep and appear to have been made by the rapid drainage of water from some point farther up the path.
>
> After several minutes of walking between lush tropical foliage, you enter a large clearing dotted with several wrecked mounds of dried mud and bamboo. Debris is strewn on the ground, and everything in sight appears to have been thoroughly soaked within the past week.

If there are any rogues in the party, the DM should secretly roll against their detect-noise skill percentage. If any roll is successful, inform the PC that he hears a faint scampering and rustling coming from the edge of the clearing. The source of the noise is Kazir, sole survivor of the island's ogre tribe (see area 3C for further details).

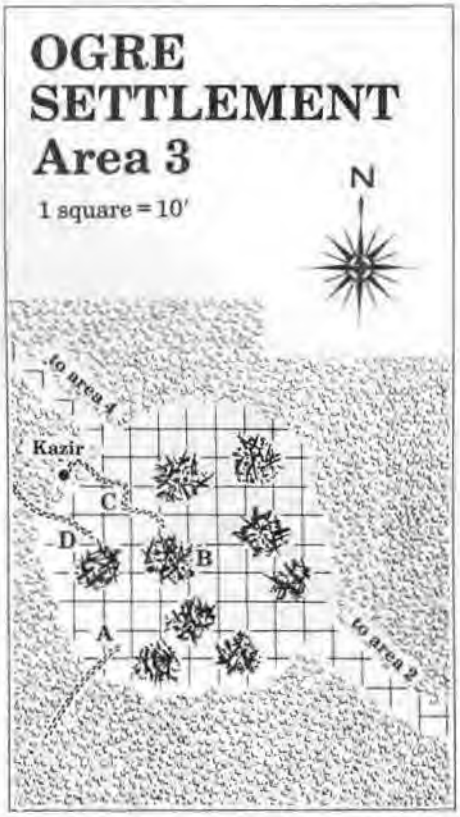
The village once held nine huts constructed of earthen bricks and bamboo frames. The dwellings were blasted by powerful jets of water during the marid's attack. All the huts save one (area 3B) have completely collapsed. Broken spears and other signs of a fierce battle are liberally strewn throughout the ruined encampment. A general search of the area will reveal one of the following details for every turn spent searching.

3A. Footprints. Near one of the huts on the edge of the clearing, footprints in the dried mud show the passage of a creature much larger than human size. Those PCs familiar with ogres can identify these tracks as being significantly larger than those of an ogre. The tracks lead southwest out of the clearing and into the sea. They were left by the marid, who entered the village in liquid form and departed carrying the ogre corpses to the morkoth's lair. Even a cursory examination will show signs of the great size of the creature that made these tracks (broken branches, trampled undergrowth, etc.).

3B. Ogre Hut. This building remains mostly intact despite the warping of its north and east walls and the collapse of its entrance. Anyone under 5' tall (and not too fat) can squeeze through the hole in the northeast corner. Crude furnishings inside the hut include a mattress of palm fronds and an overturned bamboo table.

This relatively sturdy building was the home of the ogre chieftain and houses the sacred treasures brought with the ogres from their home on the mainland. PCs investigating under the mattress can find a rusted strongbox buried beneath a thin covering of dirt. The box is sealed but can be forced open with a strength of 15 or better. It contains a boar-bone headdress (20 gp value), three sculptured lapis lazuli icons of a little-known ogre fertility god (50 gp value each), an ornate silver spearhead (old dwarven craftsmanship, worth 1,000 gp), and 29 grime-encrusted coins that are apparently worthless but, if carefully cleaned, can be sold for 50 gp each to an antiquarian. None of these items are magical, but they are sacred to Kazir and he will go to extreme ends to acquire them.

3C. More Tracks. Any PCs with tracking proficiency can note a set of fresh tracks here. These can be recognized as ogre tracks if the PCs have some previous experience with ogres.



They were left by Kazir, the ogre survivor, when he returned to scavenge for food and gear after fleeing from the giant who devastated his village. This giant was the marid Al-Azif, who in his 18'-tall humanoid form destroyed the ogre settlement and seized its inhabitants to serve as food for the morkoth.

Kazir, who had been foraging when the marid attacked, returned in time to witness his chief, Pagiz, fall in battle with the giant. Kazir fled into the underbrush until the marid departed. Since then, Kazir has lived in a concealed, bare hole in the ground nearby. He was searching the ruins for his tribe's sacred treasures because he believes they will help him if the giant returns. The arrival of the PCs caused him to flee into the nearby brush, where he spies on the adventurers as they examine the ruined village.

When his tracks are discovered, Kazir will act in one of two ways. If the PCs have retrieved the sacred tribal treasures, he emerges from the brush and demands the return of these items. He speaks a local dialect of Ogrish, quaint-sounding but nonetheless readily comprehensible to those with proficiency in

that language. Kazir waves his spear threateningly but will not engage any of the PCs in combat. If the PCs try to converse with him, he proves quite reasonable and can tell the party his story in exchange for the tribal treasures. If Kazir is attacked, he fights savagely, though he is clearly no match for the party.

If the PCs have not gained possession of the tribal artifacts, Kazir departs for his bolt-hole on discovery of his tracks. He moves speedily, watching the party as he departs. In his haste, he inadvertently springs one of Endoriana's pit traps. Subsequently, the party will hear Kazir's bellowing calls for help in Ogrish. These shouts can be easily followed to the trap at area 4A, where the PCs can rescue Kazir or deal with him as they see fit.

Kazir, ogre: INT low; AL CN; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4 + 1; hp 26; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 + 2; SZ L; ML 12; MC. No experience points are offered for killing Kazir out of hand, as he is not evil and is quite willing to talk and be a temporary ally.

3D. Still More Tracks. Along the perimeter of the village, another set of tracks can be discerned by those with tracking skill. These prints are clearly smaller than those of a typical human and never actually enter the ogre encampment. The trails lead northwest into the foliage and directly into a concealed pit trap (detailed at area 4A). The tracks and the trap were left by Endoriana, the sole un*charmed* member of the company of the *Admiral Andres.* (See area 4 for further details concerning the elf and her traps.)

4. The Fugitive. Read or paraphrase the following to the players when the PCs enter the area west of the ogre village:

> The jungle becomes extremely dense as you make your way toward the northwest shore of the isle. Roots and branches protrude over the almost-nonexistent path, limiting your view to only a few yards in front of you. After you walk for a few minutes, the trail turns to the east and narrows, forcing you to travel in single file.

Pause to allow the players to adjust their PCs' marching order to accommodate the thick foliage, then roll a dexterity check on 1d20 for the PC at the front of the party. If he fails the check, he is caught in one of Endoriana's snares (see encounter 4B for details).

Ask the PCs for their actions in the next round and roll initiative. Although the PCs are not yet under attack, standard combat procedure should put them on edge and perhaps cause trigger-happy PCs to launch a useless attack. Try to give the PCs every indication that something is about to happen to them (roll 1d20, jot down numerals on paper, etc.) and calmly note whatever actions they may take.

Endoriana is hidden above in a tree and concealed with her *cloak of elvenkind.* Moreover, she has further camouflaged herself by lying close against the trunk and tying palm fronds and other foliage to her body. Thus, even PCs capable of detecting invisible objects will not notice Endoriana unless a Wisdom check is made at a penalty of −2 (to account for her skill at hiding in shadows).

In the following encounters, Endoriana will attempt to lead the party directly into her traps, seeking to incapacitate as many of the PCs as possible before hav-

ing to deal with them directly.

The round after the point guard has been snared, a loud scraping noise comes from north of the path. This is caused by Endoriana as she removes the stone cover from an ogre well (see area 4C).

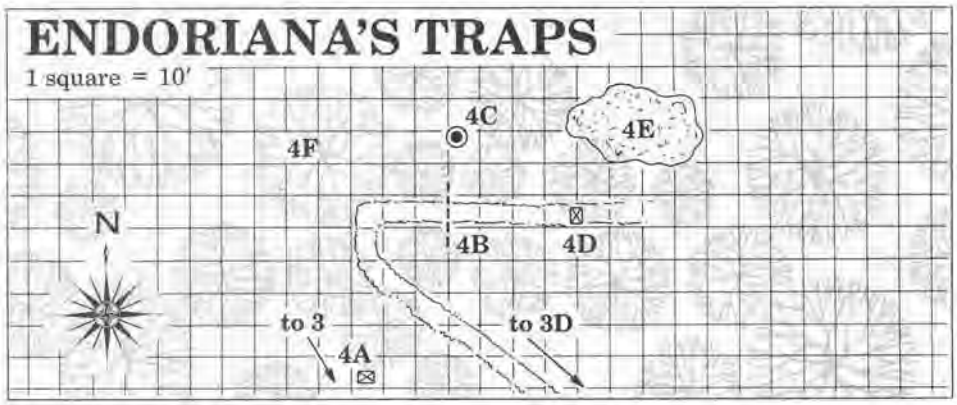
This pattern of noises leading to traps will be repeated by Endoriana as many times as possible. If she becomes aware that the party can see her, she flees into the trees directly above the nearest trap, swinging and jumping from branch to branch.

Endoriana: AL N; AC 2; MV 12 plus springing; F7/T8; hp 42; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2 or 2 (bow); Dmg by weapon type; S 14, D 19, C 15, I 13, W 10, Ch 13; ML 14; *leather armor +2, short bow +1, short sword of quickness +2, bracers of brachiation, cloak of elvenkind, boots of striding and springing,* potion of *healing,* dagger, 16 arrows. Thief skills: PP 55%, OL 50%, F/RT 95%, MS 89%, HS 75%, DN 30%, CW 90%, RL 40%. If the DM uses nonweapon proficiencies, consider Endoriana to be proficient in the following: set snares, direction sense, tumbling, survival (forest), hunting.

4A. Game Pit. This is a 10′-deep pit dug to serve the dual purpose of incapacitating threatening creatures and capturing wild game for Endoriana's food supply. The sharpened bamboo stakes buried at the bottom cause an additional 1-6 hp damage to those falling into the trap. If the PCs did not encounter the ogre Kazir previously, he is in this pit, injured and unable to stand on a broken leg. If anyone followed Endoriana's false trail from encounter 3D in the ogre village, this is the trap that they encounter.

4B. Upside-Down Trap. A tripwire runs between two large trees. It is connected to a concealed vine noose that loops over the trail (under the dirt) and is tied to a bent sapling just off the trail. Anyone crossing the tripwire must make a successful dexterity check or be jerked 30′ into the air where he is held aloft by the foot, upside down. If the unfortunate adventurer is wearing metal armor or weighs more than 200 lbs. (including equipment), the vine suspending him has a 20% cumulative chance per round of breaking, dropping the PC to the jungle floor below (and inflicting 3d6 hp damage).

4C. Old Well. This old ogre well has been disguised by Endoriana to appear identical to the forest floor. On the rim of the original well cap (which she has removed and placed to the side) she has inscribed a message in Common and has placed around it an assortment of coins equalling 24 gp total value. Anyone approaching this encounter notices the faint runes circling the cap stone. The message reads: "Be warned, slave of evil, for you are about to die!" The inscription is written in such a manner as to force the reader to move around the stone to decipher the writing. As the reader reaches the word "for," he falls into a 70′-deep well, the bottom 10′ of which are filled with water. The PC suffers 6d6 hp falling damage and must deal with the possibility of drowning at the bottom. The sides of the well are slick and damp, with no easy handholds (rogues use their climb walls skill at −30%).



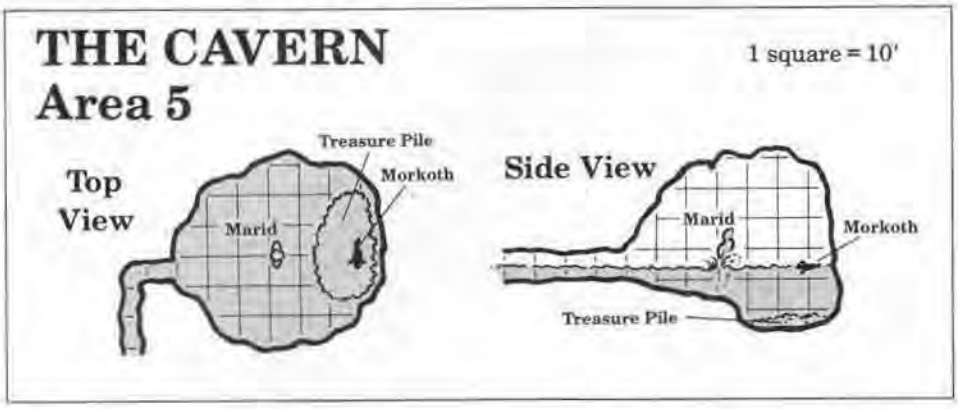
4D. Pit Trap. Endoriana heads toward this area if she is pursued on foot. Here, a 3′-deep pit is covered by a large palm leaf and some smaller bits of forest debris. The floor of the pit is lined with a wooden board through which three daggers have been pounded, blades upward. Those stepping on the leaf land on the daggers, two of which still bear active coats of a powerful magical sleep poison. Anyone stepping into this trap has an 80% chance of suffering 1d4 hp damage and must save vs. poison at −2. If the save is failed, the victim lapses into a comatose slumber lasting for 2-20 turns. Even if the save is successful, the unfortunate PC is *slowed* for 2-20 rounds. Comatose PCs cannot be roused by any means short of *neutralize poison* or *heal* spells.

4E. Quicksand Trap. This trap is the last one to which Endoriana will head. If she is being pursued by a group of angry PCs, she springs over the trap and awaits her pursuers in a tree just beyond the area. If the PCs are slow to follow her, she fires arrows from the tree at the PC who appears the most frustrated with the chase, attempting to goad the party into the quicksand. Observant PCs might note (if actively searching) that one of the trees bears an Ogrish rune indicating danger.

Anyone who blunders into the danger zone breaks through the palm leaves and light foliage covering this 20′-deep patch of quicksand. Treat the area as mud from a *transmute rock to mud* spell. Sinking PCs are easy targets for Endoriana, who shoots at those appearing capable of escape. If other PCs remain untrapped, she will flee. Malevolent DMs may wish to have sinking PCs brush against a dead snake or other submerged object, but such paranoia-inducing cruelties are strictly optional.

4F. Endoriana's Lair. This is Endoriana's treetop stronghold, where she sleeps, eats, and passes her scant spare time whittling branches into spikes for her next trap. There is little of note here, only some bananas and berries, a few boarskins, a small knife, and a stout branch that has been marked with 26 scratches (a crude calendar). The remains of a fire and some boar bones are scattered near the base of the tree.

If Endoriana cannot immobilize all party members, she attempts to escape to her lair, doubling back into the trees. If any PCs remain trapped, she tries to take them prisoner if she has safe opportunity to do so. She will engage in sustained combat only if cornered or pursued by a lone PC. If seriously



wounded (12 or fewer hp remaining), she surrenders, hoping to deceive the morkoth and escape again.

If the PCs attempt to parley with Endoriana, she talks with them from a high branch. If she has taken any prisoners, she interrogates them. Endoriana assumes that the PCs are *charmed* servants of the morkoth sent to capture her, and it will be difficult to convince her otherwise. If convinced of the party's good intentions, she introduces herself and tells her tale:

> "We had signed on to guard the *Admiral Andres,* since we needed transport back to the mainland. The captain thought the previous disappearances were suspicious for such a calm stretch of water. Anyhow, we were at sea for only a day or so when we were surrounded by a bank of thick fog. Try as we might, we couldn't leave the fog bank, and the ship was pushed off course by a strong current. Not knowing where we were heading, several sailors started fighting over positions near the pilot boat, and the captain's soldiers soon killed a couple of the crewmen.
>
> "Right after this fight, the ship bucked in the air and just about broke in half. The helmsman yelled that we'd hit a reef, and then all hell broke loose as everyone scrambled for something to hold on to. We all ended up in the drink, but everybody washed ashore, even the two dead guys in the hold and most of our provisions. Then we met the survivors from the missing ship that had been wrecked here, and they took us in for the night.
>
> "The next morning, the *Shamrock* survivors talked to the captain and urged us and the soldiers to attack the ogres living on the island. They took us to a large cave opening and claimed it was the ogres' lair. Well, we all headed into the cave, accompanied by many sailors and castaways, but as soon as we entered, everyone felt drawn toward the center of the cave. Nobody seemed to notice the rising water level.
>
> "After some time, we came into a cave half-filled with water. As soon as I entered, I could see something strange happening. All of the soldiers and sailors put down their weapons and relaxed, even though a big, slimy fish-monster was in the water next to them. Even my friends just stood there looking stupid as this ugly thing swam in front of us.
>
> "Then one of the castaways we had met, their old leader, started ordering us to return to the village and to be content and a whole lot of other garbage. I knew from their response that everyone had been *charmed,* so I just stayed quiet and left with everyone else. Well, almost everyone. Finnegan, our wizard, stayed behind with that horrid thing. I tried to pull him along, but he just walked into the water and stood there while we went back to the village.
>
> "As soon as it was dark that night, I took off for the jungle and hid. You're the first *real people* I've seen in weeks."

If treated kindly, Endoriana will accompany the party on any escape plan that seems likely to succeed. However, she will urge the PCs to destroy whatever has *charmed* her comrades and the sailors, as it appears as though this seafaring menace will strike again and could prevent their escape. She can lead the PCs to the cavern entrance (area 5) if asked.

5. The Cavern. The PCs may be directed to the cavern in a number of ways. In the grim possibility that they trusted the *charmed* castaways, they will be led to the morkoth by the *polymorphed* marid and the four most powerful NPCs. It would be much better, however, if the PCs enter the caverns wary and prepared, accompanied by Endoriana.

The cavern has only one entrance above sea level large enough to permit access by the adventurers. Five other spiralling tunnels exit into the ocean waters. If the PCs come here looking for ogres, they may notice that the cavern entrance is only large enough for man-sized creatures. Old Man Moran's explanation, if confronted with this fact, mentions other, hidden, tunnels. Decius sneers and says, "Well, I suppose that means they can't stop us from reaching their lair, can they?"

Once the PCs enter the tunnel, the morkoth's hypnotic powers take effect. The PCs are irresistibly drawn to the lair of the creature without noticing their peril (no saving throw is allowed). The tunnel is only wide enough to allow one person at a time to enter, so the players should arrange their characters in single file. If present, the marid (as Old Man Moran) takes the lead. The other NPCs bring up the rear, but they are willing to relocate if the party desires. Endoriana stays at the tail end of the line unless convinced of her safety (a fellow elf or other *charm*-resistant type behind her).

While in the tunnels, the PCs may take any normal precautions and actions, but under no circumstances can they stop moving forward. Endoriana is aware of the morkoth's enchanting abilities; if she is present, she strongly urges whatever defensive actions the PCs can take.

The PCs can easily notice the increasing depth and warmth of the water. Those capable of identifying slopes feel that the tunnel is steadily descending. If the marid is not with the party as Moran, the PCs feel a rushing current of water slip past them very quickly. This is the marid responding to the telepathic call of the morkoth, who has detected the approach of the party.

After progressing the length of the

tunnel, the PCs reach the central cavern (see "The Cavern" map). This cave is roughly hemispherical, with the floor descending to 10′ below sea level at the far end and the cavern roof reaching 40′ above sea level. The morkoth is waiting in the deep end of the cave. The first PC to enter the cavern must save vs. spells with a −4 penalty or be *charmed.*

If the PCs have an adequate light source (radius 60′ or more), a dim, murky shape may be discerned in the far end of the cavern. If he is not already among the party, the marid waits in liquid form at the center of the cavern, 30′ away from the entry. Any PCs attempting to approach the morkoth are attacked by a water jet from the marid. *Charmed* PCs step to the side of the cavern and attack anyone attempting to go around the center. *Charmed* NPCs wait until everyone has entered the cavern before attacking. They attempt to block escape at all costs.

Once combat begins, *charmed* servants attack without quarter, as the morkoth really doesn't mind a few dead bodies lying around. If water jets are insufficient, the marid assumes material shape and attacks. He has already cast *detect invisibility* upon himself (*invisible* characters will be obvious unless *levitating* or *flying,* as they displace water normally).

The servants fight until all un-*charmed* PCs are dead or the morkoth is slain, in which case the *charm* is broken for all. The morkoth itself avoids combat, preferring to float near the surface at the far end of the cavern, attracting offensive spells. The morkoth is virtually immune to all magic and reflects even area-effect spells such as *fireball* back at the caster. If anyone is able to approach the morkoth, it submerges and fights underwater.

In extremes (if, for example, none of the party is *charmed*), the marid will use its *limited wish* ability to raise the water level in the cavern to the ceiling. Remember the restrictions on underwater combat at all times (see the 2nd Edition *DMG,* page 79). Any individuals (including the marid) freed from the *charm* (by *dispel magic* or some other means) will join in the attack against the morkoth.

If the party is of lower level or has bad luck saving against the morkoth's *charm,* a kind DM may wish to allow them to find a *ring of spell storing with dispel magic.* However, if the PCs are more experienced or have ample opportunity to overcome the enemy, the DM should pull no punches. Ingenious (or desperate) PCs might attempt to act *charmed,* like Endoriana. Unless they demonstrate independent behavior, the morkoth will not check for *charm* (such as testing whether or not individuals obey his suggestions). Moreover, neither the morkoth nor the marid will remember Endoriana (puny mortals tend to look alike after you've seen a lot of them).

Al-Azif, marid: INT high; AL CN; AC 0; MV 9, fly 15 (B), swim 24; HD 13; hp 76; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 8d4; SA many spell-like abilities, water jet; SD immune to water-based magic, resistant to cold; MR 25%; SZ H; ML 20; XP 15,000; MC.

Morkoth: INT exceptional; AL CE; AC 3; MV swim 18; HD 7; hp 31; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10; SA tunnel hypnosis, *charm;* SD spell reflection; MR special; SZ M; ML 14; XP 2,000; MC.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs slay the morkoth, all *charmed* individuals are freed. The grateful Al-Azif overcomes his proud nature and provides magical transport for all concerned (using a *limited wish* spell, unless he has already done so) to a location of their choice. If the PCs are insolent or suspicious of the marid in any way, he departs in a huff to the plane of elemental Water. Under no circumstances will he perform any other services for the PCs, as he must resume his delayed search for the lost elemental treasure.

If both the marid and the morkoth are slain, or if Al-Azif is unable to assist them, the castaways can construct a seaworthy vessel in two weeks' time. They will gladly ferry the PCs back to Port Naliam.

If the morkoth appears to have won the battle (all PCs dead, *charmed*, or feigning *charm*), it eats one random PC, alive or dead. This should dissuade any PC pretending *charm* from waiting very long to escape. If no un*charmed* PCs remain alive, and Endoriana is also out of the picture, consider the adventure over (at least until new PCs hear about the vanishing ships).

At the bottom of the cavern, surviving PCs can find 7,546 gp and 21,805 gp worth of silver ingots (4,361 bars each worth 5 gp). Scrupulous PCs will return this treasure to its proper owners (merchants and mine-owners in Alir and Port Naliam). Unscrupulous PCs will find themselves trailed by assassins, bounty hunters, and mercenary wizards should they manage to remove this loot from the cavern.

Elsewhere in the cavern, among the skeletal remains of the morkoth's food, the PCs can discover a *wand of conjuration* (33 charges); potions of *climbing, invisibility,* and *cloud giant strength;* a *rod of lordly might* (48 charges); and a sealed wizard scroll with the spells *prismatic spray, delayed blast fireball,* and *mass invisibility.* This treasure will not be reclaimed by the sailors, as it belongs to their deceased comrades and constitutes the survivors' reward to their rescuers.

Upon returning to Port Naliam, the adventurers are met by the Lord Mayor, who congratulates them on a job well done. He proposes a ceremony in which the PCs are named "Guardians of the Sea," a purely honorary title without real reward or official responsibility, but with possible later effects.

The scenario has several possible follow ups. Endoriana and her un-*charmed* friends might fill any openings in the party ranks (well, perhaps not Decius Claius), as they are so few as to no longer constitute much of an adventuring group. At some future date, the PCs might be called upon by the Lord Mayor of Port Naliam to perform some service as Guardians of the Sea. The PCs are under no compulsion to perform such duties, but the title could be easily revoked, resulting in a substantial loss of public honor. The PCs could be used as political troubleshooters (or lightning rods) in situations where the normal authorities could not or would not serve. In any case, the task would probably be deceptively simple and extremely dangerous. Ω

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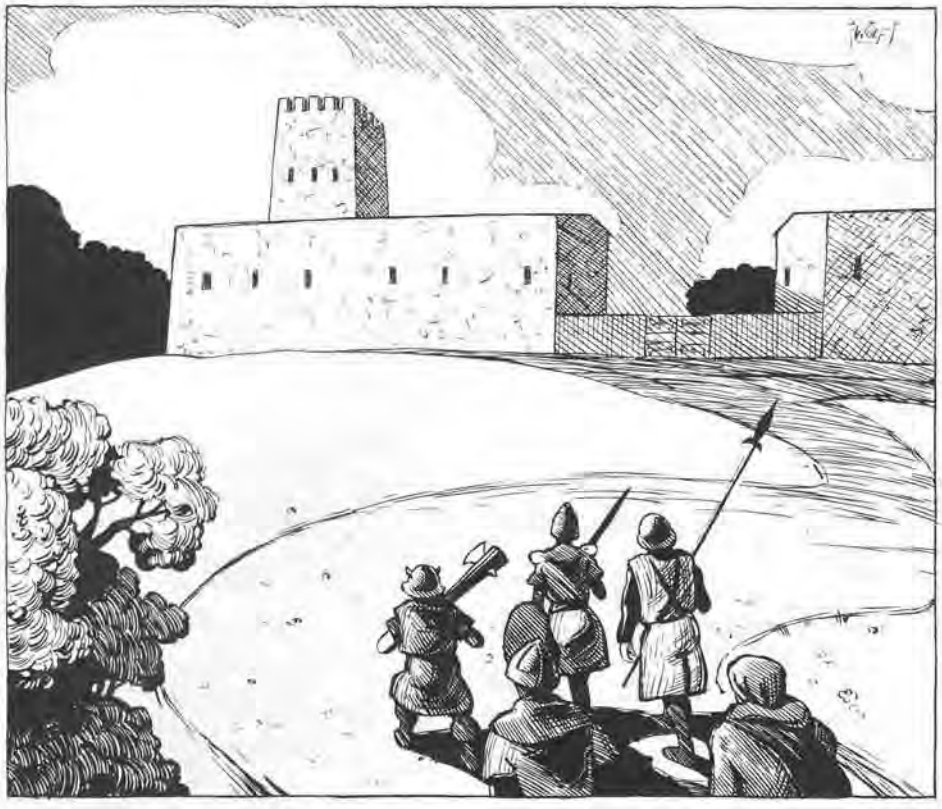


THE SIEGE OF KRATYS FREEHOLD

BY TED JAMES THOMAS ZUVICH

The orcs remembered Tarran Kratys. Today he wishes they had not.

Artwork by P. L. Wolf

Ted would like to thank all the gamers who play-tested this adventure, whether they won or lost the battle, especially Karl, Greg, Kevin, Michael, Eilidh, Matthew, Doug, Terrance, Ian, and John. Fight on!

"The Siege of Kratys Freehold" is an AD&D® 2nd Edition adventure for 4-8 player characters of levels 1-4 (at least 12 total levels). Playing time for this scenario is 4-8 hours. In order to play this adventure, you will need a large table and several dozen miniatures to represent the various forces. In a pinch, some cardboard counters will do. Although the adventure includes large-scale combat that could be resolved with the BATTLESYSTEM™ rules, the text includes a set of rules that allows this adventure to be played with little deviation from the standard AD&D rules. The word "unit" herein is taken to mean a squad of five humans or orcs (see "Combat" for details).

The PC group should include several fighters and a mage of at least 3rd level. The adventure works best with PCs of good or neutral alignments. It is strongly suggested that you use the optional nonweapon proficiency rules. Useful proficiencies include blacksmithing, engineering, leather working, stone masonry, and healing. In order to succeed in this scenario, the PCs will need a diverse set of abilities and talents.

This adventure assumes that the player characters have very few magical items; a 3rd-level PC might have one low-power item. As a guideline, magical items present in the group should have an experience-point value of 500 XP or less. Suitable items include potions, scrolls, and +1 weapons. You can adapt this feature to a more conventional style of play with a minimum of effort.

This adventure is meant to be a challenging scenario for a group of skilled players who have experience with tactical war games. If you feel that the phrase "very good tacticians" cannot be used to describe your group of players, you may wish to modify the adventure.

"The Siege of Kratys Freehold" can be played as a precursor to the module "Courier Service," found in DUNGEON® issue #27. This adventure takes place in the nation of Volkrad, a year or so before the events described in "Courier Service." It is possible that Tarran Kratys served in the army with General

X'Celsiah Mia, in which case he would be quick to recommend the PCs (assuming that they successfully complete this adventure) to the general when she runs into her "difficulty" in "Courier Service."

Adventure Background

Roughly a month ago, in the middle of summer, a destructive fire raged through the coastal city of L'Trel (or any large coastal city in your campaign). The fire caused great hardship in L'Trel and the surrounding countryside; thousands of people died in the blaze, and thousands more died (and are still dying) in the plagues and civil unrest that followed.

L'Trel is (or was) the main bastion of civilization for a large section of coastline centered on the Reach River valley. L'Trel is a major city in the nation of Volkrad, a huge, sprawling, underpopulated land (see the map of the Nation of Volkrad on page 25 of DUNGEON issue #27). Volkrad has laid claim to the river valley and the hills beyond, but most of the humanoids living in the hills actively dispute the claim.

Volkrad's army normally maintains a constant patrol around the border of the Reach River valley, to provide some of the outlying farms (known as freeholds) a degree of protection against marauding orcs, ogres, trolls, and other humanoid raiders. However, even though all of its citizens serve a mandatory three-year term in the army, Volkrad is always short of soldiers. In the aftermath of the recent fire in L'Trel, troops were needed to restore order and aid in the rebuilding process. A sacrifice had to be made, so the army gave up its patrols of the valley border and sent runners to inform the freeholds that they were on their own until L'Trel returned to at least a semblance of order.

The orcs of the hills and mountains quickly noticed the valley's predicament. After gathering information about the extent of the damage to L'Trel, the orcish high-command of the Blood Rune tribe charged one of its bright young captains, a half-orc named Hallir (see "Orc Personnel Roster"), to assemble a small troop and go wreak havoc in the now-defenseless outer reaches of the valley. The opportunity created by the fire seemed too good to pass up.

Captain Hallir immediately picked his target: Kratys Freehold, the home of one of his tribe's most hated enemies, Tarran Kratys. During his term of active duty as a captain in Volkrad's army, Tarran Kratys earned the undying enmity of the Blood Rune tribe through several humiliating defeats. The orcs have been trying to get revenge on Tarran for years. Unfortunately, for them, Tarran has been living in the valley, protected by the army's regular patrols, ever since he retired from active duty four years ago. Now, Hallir intends to take the opportunity presented by the collapse of the border patrols to make a deadly strike at Tarran.

For the Dungeon Master

This scenario is meant to wring every ounce of creativity out of both the Dungeon Master and the players. If the PCs do an average or poor job of defending Kratys Freehold, the holders will lose the battle against the orcs.

Before starting the scenario, copy the freehold and its surroundings onto a "battlemat" or a large piece of paper. At a minimum, draw out the freehold buildings and the surrounding orchard. Use the largest scale possible; 1" (on the map) = 10 yards is a good scale to use. Blocks or paper counters are suitable for representing the buildings and surroundings. The creative use of other items can substitute when there are not enough miniatures.

Beginning the Adventure

To get the PCs to stop at Kratys Freehold, you can use one of the following adventure hooks or make up something that ties into the events of a larger campaign. All of the lead-ins below assume that the PCs are traveling in the vicinity of the freehold. Kratys Freehold is located near the south end of the Reach River valley (otherwise known as the L'Trel Valley), quite close to the foothills.

1. Isolated freeholds often serve as wayside inns, providing travelers with a place to sleep and a hot meal for a small price. An NPC in the area could suggest that the PCs stop at Kratys Freehold for a night; the Kratys are known for their hospitality.

2. A PC fighter needs level training. After the PCs make enquiries, a local NPC suggests that they contact Tarran Kratys. ("He's a former army captain, you know.") If a PC mage needs level training, the NPC suggests seeing Myrs Kratys, Tarran's wife and a well-known mage.

3. One of the PC's horses throws a shoe. Everyone in the vicinity knows that Tarran's son, Brand, is the best blacksmith around.

With adventure hook 2 or 3, the PCs might have to return to Kratys Freehold several times before the orc attack occurs. With this approach, Tarran would not have to hire the PCs (see below); they should be willing to assist out of friendship.

Nearing the Freehold

As the PCs reach the freehold, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Even though you've gone a few days out of your way, Kratys Freehold has been easy to find. The sun is setting now, but you can see the freehold just ahead. With a muttered "thank you" to the merchant who told you how to get to this out-of-the-way place, you pick up your pace a little, hoping to make it to the freehold before full dark.
>
> The freehold perches on the top of a small, bare hill that lies in the middle of a carefully cultivated orchard. From here, it appears that the freehold consists of several large stone buildings surrounded by a high, sturdy log fence. A watchtower, rising from one corner of the stockade, completes the defensive structure of the freehold.
>
> In just a few minutes, the short climb up the hill is finished and you are standing in front of the freehold gates. The young man on guard duty meets you in the graveled road in front of the gate.

If the PCs politely explain their purpose in coming to Kratys Freehold, the guard stands aside and lets them pass through the gate into the courtyard. Tarran himself comes to the gate to greet the PCs and inform them of the freehold's rates. The freehold charges 1 gp per night per person for a space in the main hall, or 5 sp for a space in the barn's hayloft. This prices include meals. The Kratys freeholders will also care for and feed horses, mules, etc., at a cost of 2 sp per animal.

An After-Dinner Discussion

Whatever reason the PCs have for coming to Kratys Freehold, the suppertime conversation turns to the PCs' exploits. The Kratys family seems very interested in such tales, and you should encourage the PCs to tell a few stories about their past adventures.

After the PCs have had a chance to brag for a few minutes, read or paraphrase the following to the players. Although the text below presents a set speech by Tarran, this is only part of a conversation between him and the PCs. The players will interrupt with questions, and you should do your best to keep a conversational rather than a speech-delivering tone of voice.

> You've been up for hours, swapping tales of the past with Tarran, his wife, and the other Kratys freeholders. The freeholders paid great attention to your tales of past exploits. In his turn, Tarran spins several stories about his life in the Volkrad Army. Tarran's tales reveal a long and varied military career and a fine tactical mind.
>
> The tide of conversation has shifted though, and now you are discussing more recent events. As your journey takes you closer to the great city of L'Trel, you've been hearing tales of woe and destruction in the city. You never imagined those troubles could affect someone this far from the city, but the other freeholders become pensive and quiet as Tarran's deep, battle-roughened voice fills the deepening gloom of the great hall.
>
> "I'm sure you've heard about the great fire that swept through L'Trel about a month ago. Even out here on the freehold, we've heard all sorts of rumors flying about as to what caused it. The most prevalent rumor has it that the fire was started by a magical accident. A grain buyer came through two days ago and told me that the fire came close to destroying the whole city. I've also heard that the fire destroyed the city granaries and most of the shipyards, and that thousands of people died. A couple of people came by last week, saying that L'Trel was rife with looting, food riots, and general lawlessness. Terrible times, but until now we never figured that L'Trel's troubles would touch us.
>
> "A messenger came by the other day and told us that the army has decided to temporarily cancel all the valley border patrols and divert the soldiers into L'Trel to keep order in the city. It's that lack of a border patrol that bothers me. There's all kinds of orcs up in the hills, just waiting for a chance to raid the valley. With the patrols gone, and our freehold being so far off the beaten path, I think it's just a matter of time before we get some sort of trouble.
>
> "Tell you what. I developed some pretty good instincts by the time I made captain, and my impression is that you are good and trustworthy. If you'll stay on here at the freehold as men-at-arms for the next 30 days, or until the army patrols resume, I'll give you each 1 gp per day, meals, a bed, and care for your animals. In addition, if you stay the full 30 days, I'll throw in a bonus of 50 gp for each of you. Sound good?"
>
> His offer presented, Tarran leans back in his chair, exchanges a strained look with his wife, Myrs, and quietly waits for your answer.

Tarran's offer is negotiable. In addition to the 1 gp per day offered, he will include up to 1 sp per day per level of the PC. One gold piece per day is a very generous offer (see page 110 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) for this type of work.

If the PCs have come to the freehold for level training, Tarran offers the following instead of the above wage-offer. All the PCs can have hot meals and beds, and one of the PCs will receive free level training, if all of the PCs agree to stay at the freehold for 30 days. He will not train any of the PCs (and neither will Myrs) if the PCs refuse to stay. If the PCs refuse Tarran's offer and leave the freehold, this adventure is over.

If the PCs accept Tarran's offer of employment, the freeholders quickly add the PCs to their watch/duty cycles. Refer to the following section to determine the sequence of events after the PCs hire on at the freehold.

Siege Timetable

This timetable describes the major events of the orc attack. Time is given on a 24-hour clock. Sunrise is at 07:30 each day, and the sun sets at 20:30. Remember that the PCs' actions can radically alter this timeline. Also, the freeholders and PCs do not necessarily know what the orcs are doing, even though the timetable gives a description of their actions. In order to spy out some of these events, the PCs will have to send scouts over the freehold walls.

Day One

The PCs hire on at Kratys Freehold as guards, as described the previous section. At this time, lay out a battlemat (or large piece of paper) with the freehold drawn on it, and give the players the Freehold Area map and the detail map of Kratys Freehold.

Most of the time, the PCs will have calm watch duty. It is best to simply skip over this time period, after mentioning to the players that the PCs have five days of mind-numbingly boring watch duty. At your discretion, random encounters may occur in the time between when the PCs hire on and when the orcs begin their attack on Day Six. Use a random encounter table for Temperate Forest or Temperate Rough terrain.

Day Six

19:30. As the freeholders trail back into the hold after a hard day of work in the fields, the lookout in the tower spots a suspicious-looking dust cloud coming from the southern field (area 6) and rings the alarm bell. The freeholders promptly round up the livestock, hurriedly preparing to shut the gates. One turn after the alarm sounds, the freeholders gather inside the freehold and shut the gates.

Myrs informs the PCs that Tarran went out to the southern field in the morning has not yet returned. If the PCs want to go out into the south field to look for Tarran and investigate the dust cloud, Myrs informs the PCs that Tarran has issued standing orders that no one is to leave the freehold for any reason during an alarm, once the gates are shut. Myrs and the other freeholders will do everything short of resorting to physical violence to enforce this order.

One turn after the gates shut, Tarran comes hobbling through the orchard with five orcs in hot pursuit. The orcs stop at the inner edge of the orchard and shoot arrows at Tarran while he limps up the hill toward the freehold wall. Despite his wounds, Tarran skillfully limps and jogs his way up the hill,

avoiding most of the arrows. Once he gets to the freehold wall, the other freeholders lower a rope and haul him over. The five orcs leave the orchard as soon as Tarran gets over the wall; they remain in hiding until the main orc attack force arrives.

Tarran collapses from his wounds seconds after he is hauled over the wall. The freeholders carry their leader into the main hall (area 10B). Myrs quickly attends to Tarran, pulling out several arrows and using her healing skills on him. After a few moments, Tarran regains consciousness. When Tarran comes around, Myrs assures everyone that he will live, but it will be some time before he recovers from his wounds.

In his current state, Tarran can talk and give orders, but he cannot fight. The freeholders quickly gather around Tarran to hear what happened. Assuming that the PCs join the crowd, read or paraphrase the following to the players.

> His bloody head still cradled in his wife's lap, Tarran urges everyone to come closer so he can tell you what happened in the south field. The freehold leader coughs up a bubble of blood that Myrs tenderly wipes away, then the fighting man talks in a faint whisper broken by coughing fits, a mere shadow of the dynamic boom of his normal voice.
>
> "Looks like we got trouble sooner than I expected. Reyals, Matthew, Kery, and myself were working the south field, repairing some of the irrigation ditches. All of a sudden, Kery drops with a black-shafted arrow through her throat. The rest of us saw what happened and hit the dirt, but I think another arrow got Matthew straight away, and Reyals and I both got nicked. A dozen or so orcs came running out of the trees between us and the freehold. The wretched creatures must've spent hours sneaking around in order to get into position. We ran for it, but they cut us off. I managed to get through, but when I turned to help Reyals, the orcs had already cut him down.
>
> "Losing those three to marauding orcs hurts, but that isn't the worst of it. I recognized their shield sign: they're orcs of the Blood Rune tribe. Those of you who didn't serve with me in the army might not know what that means. I led a couple of successful sorties against the Blood Rune tribe, and they swore vengeance against me. They've been wanting to get at me for years, but the border patrols kept 'em out. I'm certain that those dozen or so orcs were an advance scouting force for a larger attack group. I think we'd better get ready for a siege."
>
> Tarran's speech trails off for a moment, then that same whisper issues orders to prepare the freehold for attack.

At this time, inform the players that, in addition to playing their normal PCs, they will also run Captain Tarran Kratys and the freehold forces for the rest of this adventure. Be sure that the players clearly understand that Tarran's objective is to see that the freehold survives. Give the players a copy of the "Freeholders' Statistics and Equipment" sidebar. Look at a watch or a clock and begin timing the scenario now. The time taken to complete the scenario will be important when awarding experience points for the adventure.

Control of Myrs, Llewyn, and Brand, the three important NPCs, should be given to three individual players. Tarran and the rest of the freeholders should remain under the group control of all the players. If all the players pool their knowledge and ideas to run Tarran, their final decisions should provide a more accurate portrayal of his extensive battlefield experience.

From now on, do not interfere with the players' decisions regarding the freeholders, unless they are acting in a manner contrary to the freeholders' best interests. Any time that you need to tell the players something that one of the freeholders would know, step into the appropriate role for a moment. The players should make their own decisions; you will simply relate whatever information is required, then return the NPC to the players' control.

Give the players a few minutes to look over the "Freeholders' Statistics and Equipment" sidebar, then ask the players what they plan to do to prepare for the attack. The players will come up with ideas for defending the freehold. Tell them (in the character of Tarran Kratys) how many men will be required, the raw materials needed, the estimated time to completion, etc. Base your answers on the information presented in "Possible Player Actions." Once the players have decided which PCs and which freeholders are doing what, move on to the next event in the timetable. No more than one hour should be spent in this phase of the scenario. If the players spend too much time planning and plotting, they will reduce their experience-point award. See Table Two.

During this phase, the players "are" Tarran Kratys, furiously thinking of ways to defend his people and his freehold, and perhaps occasionally consulting with his family and with his newly hired mercenaries (the PCs). It may be necessary to remind the players of this fact several times during their discussions. The danger of having the players control Tarran Kratys is that the players may be more concerned with having their PCs go for glory rather than defending the freehold and looking out for the freeholders. If the players try several times but seem utterly unable to think as if they were Tarran, you should give total control of Tarran to the player you feel would best be able to handle it.

20:00. The main orc attack force arrives, and the orcs begin establishing a camp at area 7. Trees screen the campsite from observation from the freehold. Captain Hallir posts one unit of medium infantry on guard duty in the camp, and three units of archers take up concealed guard positions at three locations (area 8) along the edge of the orchard; this cover gives −4 to the orcs' armor class. (Remember that each unit consists of five warriors, humans or orcs.) The rest of the troops work on establishing a camp.

The orcish archers have a virtually unlimited supply of arrows, so they shoot at anybody they see on the freehold walls. They also fire off completely random shots from time to time, just to keep heads down in the freehold.

21:00. An orcish herald (heavy infantryman: AC 4; hp 8; see "Orc Personnel Roster" for complete statistics) strides up to the front gate of the freehold and demands to speak with Tarran Kratys. The herald carries two flags. One flag is white, and the other bears the red, runic emblem of the Blood Rune tribe. In booming, orc-accented Common, the herald shouts, "I bear a message for the

Freeholders' Statistics and Equipment

Many of the freeholders have had more than eight years service in Volkrad's army. Those freeholders who have not yet served or who did not serve for quite so long have been heavily trained by the long-term army veterans. Because of their training, the freeholders form a highly efficient fighting unit. In a normal army, the freeholders would count as "elite" troops.

Tarran Kratys (human male, age 50): AL CG; AC 5 (10); MV 12 (1); F6; hp 48 (4); THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +3; S 18(07), D 9, C 15, I 14, W 16, Ch 17; chain mail, *bastard sword +1,* long bow, short sword, spear, dagger. Nonweapon proficiencies: reading/writing (free), languages (modern Orcish), land-based riding, animal lore, agriculture.

Tarran is a natural leader. During his time in the army, he won many battles with daring, innovative tactical maneuvers. Since his retirement four years ago, Tarran has devoted himself to the success of the freehold.

Myrs Kratys (human female, age 48): AL CG; AC 8; MV 12; M5; hp 13; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 8, D 16, C 12, I 16, W 14, Ch 12; staff; two potions of *healing* (heal 4+1d8 hp each). Spells: *detect magic, mending* (×2), *Tenser's floating disk, levitate, strength, clairvoyance. Myrs also has several other spells in her tomes: audible glamer, charm person, comprehend languages, read magic, sleep, continual light, pyrotechnics, web, lightning bolt, suggestion.* Nonweapon proficiencies: engineering, healing, languages (modern Elvish), reading/writing (free).

Myrs served as an army medic and engineer for several years. She quit the army about 20 years ago to spend time running the freehold. Myrs is conscientious and inquisitive.

Brand (human male, age 24): AL CG; AC 4; MV 12; F2; hp 17; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +3; S 18(20), D 10, C 13, I 14, W 11, Ch 17; chain mail, shield, bastard sword, long bow, spear, short sword. Nonweapon proficiencies: blacksmithing, reading/writing (free), armorer.

Brand is Tarran and Myrs's oldest son. He recently completed a six-year stint in the army and is visiting his home while looking for an opportunity to open his own smithy. Brand is a ferocious fighter and a very clever smith.

Llewyn (human female, age 23): AL CG; AC 6; MV 9; R2; hp 20; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type; S 14, D 12, C 15, I 13, W 14, Ch 15; HS 15%, MS 21%; studded leather armor, shield, long sword, dagger, long bow, lasso. Nonweapon proficiencies: land-based riding, reading/writing (free), survival-forest.

Llewyn is Tarran and Myrs's oldest daughter. She is an army scout currently home on leave. Like many rangers, this tough, perceptive, and highly observant woman prefers to be alone.

Freeholders (four units light infantry): AL CG; AC 6; MV 9; F1; hp 8 (×20); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; studded leather armor, shield, short sword, spear, long bow, dagger. Nonweapon proficiencies: varied (tend toward military and agricultural disciplines; three slots each).

These freeholders are the Kratys' employees, retainers, and their families. Several of the Kratys' younger children are also included in this group.

Children (10): AL any good; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level humans; hp 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type. These noncombatant children of the freehold will defend themselves if necessary.

Cyrus and **Canis** (guard dogs): INT semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 18, 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ M; ML 17; studded leather armor. The guard dogs will attack orcs on a command from one of the freeholders. These huge canines even have studded leather armor and spiked collars.

Sheep dogs (4): Int semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SZ S; ML 10. If the dogs pass a morale check, they will attack orcs on command.

Light war horse (Llewyn's): Int animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 24; HD 2; hp 13; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-4; SZ L; ML 17.

Hawks (2): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV fly 33 (B); HD 1; hp 6, 4; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1; SA attack eyes; SD never surprised; SZ S; ML 9; MC. If the hawks pass a morale check, they will attack orcs on command.

Freehold Equipment List

The items listed below represent a partial list of supplies available at the freehold. This list is not complete but should serve as an indication of what types and amounts of goods are available. It is up to you to decide if any item not on this list is available at the freehold. Because the freehold is so isolated, the freeholders keep some rather odd items tucked away here and there. If they discover a need for an item, they do not have to either manufacture it or journey to a town to buy it.

Livestock and animals. Six riding horses, one light war horse (Llewyn's), chickens, ducks, goats, two guard dogs, four sheep dogs, two trained hawks, 10 barn cats, 12 draft horses, 50 cows, 150 sheep, 30 pigs.

Transport. Three hay wagons, six general wagons, two riding buggies, four extra wagon wheels with iron hoops.

Tools. Pitchforks, shovels, axes, hand tools, scythes, rope, buckets, two five-gallon kegs of nails, 100 iron spikes, winch, sledges, three plows, assorted smithy tools, assorted woodworking and leatherworking tools.

Food and provisions. Sugar, flour, hams, mutton, dried and salted beef, fruit, canned and dried fruit, sacks of grain, sacks of dried beans, barrels of water, butter, ale, beer, and wine.

Weapons and armor. Spears (25), arrows (500), old chain mail (5 suits), long swords (5), short swords (25), long bows (25), shields (25), knives (50), studded leather armor (25 suits).

Miscellaneous. Boards and planks, four spare log-pieces for the walls, hay, five cords of firewood, leather, a 20-gallon barrel of lamp oil, lanterns, 10 *continual light* stones, four *continual light* lanterns, a five-gallon barrel of pitch, a 15-gallon barrel of tar, a 15-gallon barrel of grease, 100 torches, 100 square yards of canvas, two 2′×3′ bronze mirrors, a 20× telescope, whitewash, soap, ash, metal chains, 500 lbs. of bricks, wire, metal stocks, one 20′×30′ weighted fishing net, fishing line and hooks, hundreds of canvas sacks of various sizes, 20 roughed-out horseshoes.

despicable Tarran Kratys." He then waits quietly until Tarran arrives at the wall. If Tarran is still severely wounded, he will have to be carried to the wall.

When Tarran arrives, the orc herald delivers his ultimatum. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

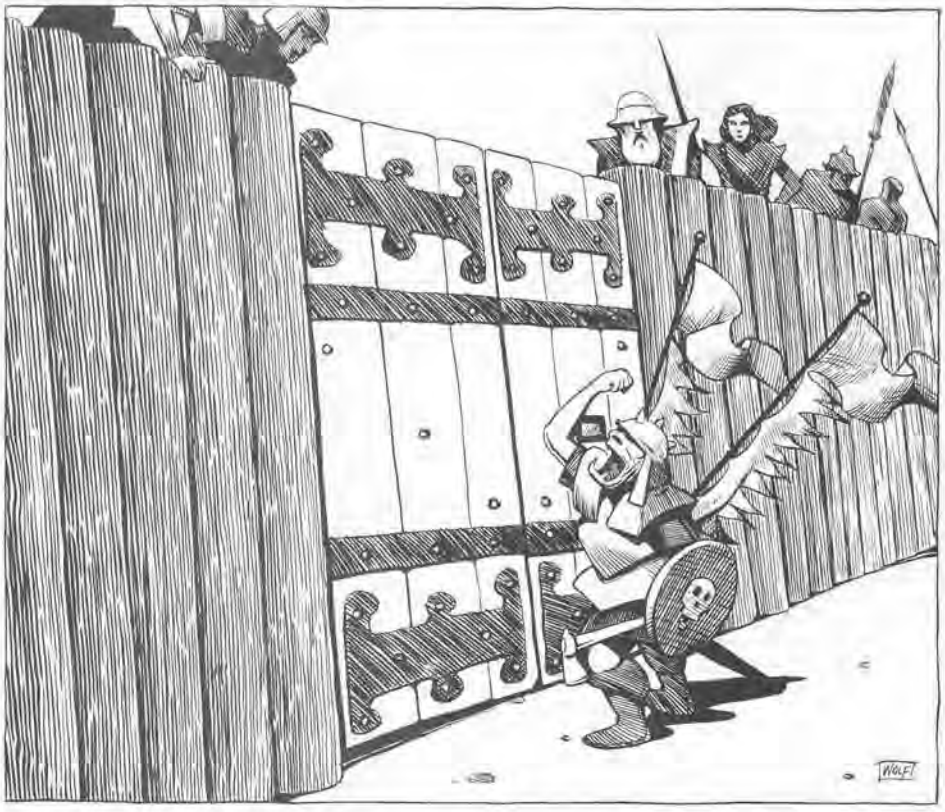
> The orcish herald outside the gate puffs out his chest and loudly delivers his message in harshly accented Common. "Greetings, most lowly worms, from the noble warrior Captain Hallir, beloved of the Blood Rune tribe. Know ye, Tarran Kratys, that for your atrocious and heinous crimes against the natural order and against the most high Blood Rune tribe, your life and all of your property are forfeit. The same holds for those foolish unfortunates you have duped into following your misguided, weak, and pitiful ways.
>
> "If your forces lay down all their weapons now and you peaceably surrender, Captain Hallir promises that you and all your men will be given a quick and painless death, and that your women will be spared and kept as slaves, a position of higher honor than any they could hope to occupy in your decadent human society. If you should foolishly choose to resist your fate, Captain Hallir promises that you will all die in a long and terrible manner. You may think this over, but answer soon."

Captain Hallir does not expect the freeholders to accept this offer; it was issued simply as a formality.

Orcs do not honor any of the human conventions of warfare, such as using a white flag to signify a truce. However, they are confident that Tarran and the rest of the freeholders will obey the "rules of war," and they will use this against the freeholders if they can. The orcs may ask for a parley outside the walls under a flag of truce, then attack in large numbers and slaughter the members of the freehold truce party.

22:00. In the center of their camp (area 7), the orcs begin assembling a light catapult to use against the freehold. They brought some of the necessary parts along with them, and the trees in the area will provide the rest.

Assembling the catapult requires two dedicated units of medium infantry (see "Orc Personnel Roster"). If the orcs



assemble the catapult by themselves, it will not be finished until 10:00 on Day Seven. The timetable assumes that Bo the Ogre (see "Orc Personnel Roster") supplies muscle power to move the large pieces into place. Bo's help allows the orcs to finish the catapult at 06:00 on Day Seven.

Hallir orders five units of his medium infantry to start making scaling ladders. Each unit can make two scaling ladders per hour. The orcs continue to work until they have fashioned 50 ladders, which should take them about five hours. The scaling ladders are part of Hallir's back-up for attacking the freehold, but if everything goes as planned, the catapult will demolish the log wall and the orcs "won't need no stinkin' ladders."

Two units of medium infantry begin fashioning archery blinds at the edge of the orchard, in the areas already occupied by the archers (area 8). The orcs can fashion one blind per hour out of branches, dirt, trees chopped down in the orchard, etc. When complete, each of the blinds provides 75% cover (−7 to AC) for five archers.

Medium infantry orcs stationed at five random locations in the orchard begin banging on war drums. Unless they are stopped, the orcs will keep this up 24 hours a day. One orc occupies each location, for a total of one unit's worth of orcs. The orcs move around a bit from time to time, so the freeholders cannot home in on the source of the noise. As long as the orcs continue to beat on the drums, spell-casters in the freehold cannot recover spells.

Day Seven

06:00. The orcs finish making the light catapult and begin firing loads of heavy stone at the freehold's back log wall (area 10F). The orcs aim for area 10F because it is weaker than the other sections of wall, thanks to the gate. The catapult continues to fire at a rate of one shot every 15 minutes. Operating the catapult requires one unit of medium infantry.

At your option, the orcs could load the catapult with small rocks instead of large rocks, one out of every four shots. The orcs aim the small rocks to spray over the freehold compound. Anyone in the freehold who is not under cover or in one of the buildings must make a

saving throw vs. paralyzation or take 1-8 hp damage. Don't set up a schedule of small rock usage; keep the pattern random. These periodic spray shots force the freeholders to take cover, but every spray shot lengthens the time it takes to batter down the wall.

Before he orders a frontal assault, Captain Hallir wants to knock a 30'-wide hole in the wall, enough space to march in two five-man units simultaneously. A look at the simple siege weapon rules on page 76 of the *DMG* reveals that it would take hundreds of dice rolls before the catapult bashed a hole 30' wide. To avoid having to those rolls, use the "Wall Destruction" table (see sidebar) to determine when the wall falls. The results listed in this table are based on a probability analysis of how long it would take a light catapult to bash through a 30' long, 10' high, 1' thick wooden wall.

The "Save" column refers to the current saving throw bonus of the wall (if any) vs. the light catapult. The PCs might decide to reinforce the walls of the freehold (see "Possible Player Actions"), which is why the "Save" column is necessary. The "Time of Fall—No Spray" column gives the time when the wall falls if the orcs are not using spray shots of small rocks. The "Time of Fall—Spray" column gives the time when the wall falls if the orcs do use small-rock spray shots.

08:00 and later. The orcs use this time to accomplish miscellaneous destructive tasks, such as chopping down trees, making deadfalls and pits in the orchard, and damming up and fouling the stream. The orcs make three battering rams from tall trees that dot the freehold. It takes five orc-hours to construct one ram. The orcs also destroy the wagon bridge (area 4). Some of the orcs sleep, but at least two-thirds of the orcs remain awake at all times.

At this time, the orcs can accomplish any other tasks that the DM feels are necessary.

Day Eight

04:00 or 10:00. Under optimum conditions (for the orcs), the light catapult finishes bashing a 30' long gap in the rear wall (area 10F) in the morning (the exact time depends on the orcs' use of spray shot). The catapult continues to fire loads of small rocks at the freehold, to keep the freeholders from trying to repair the wall.

20:30. The sun sets, and Hallir orders an assault on the freehold. All units advance to the gap in the wall with their shields locked over their heads. The shield-lock technique gives the orcs a −2 adjustment to armor class. Because of the darkness, the freeholders have a −4 penalty on attack rolls.

It takes the orcs one round to charge up the hill from the edge of the orchard to the gap in the wall. When the orcs reach the gap, they attack with +2 to hit because of the charge. They also have a −2 penalty to initiative and an AC penalty of 1. See *DMG*, page 59.

The first attack wave consists of half the medium infantry units (eight units). Two units of orcs can force their way through the 30' gap in the wall every round. The second orc attack wave follows three rounds behind the first, and consists of three-quarters of the remaining units of medium infantry (six units). Three rounds later, the third wave attacks: two units of heavy infantry, Bo the ogre, Goomjaba the orc shaman, and Captain Hallir (see "Orc Personnel Roster" for their statistics). Goomjaba hangs back from hand-to-hand combat and uses his spells until they are exhausted. Two units of medium infantry and two archer units remain in the orchard, near the orc camp, as reserves.

Combat

This adventure features a large-scale combat as its central event. In a battle this large, the normal AD&D combat rules would be too awkward and time consuming to use. In order to speed up large-scale combat resolution, use the following procedure.

Wall Destruction

Save	Time of Fall (No Spray)	Time of Fall (Spray)
0	Day 8, 04:00	Day 8, 10:00
+1	Day 8, 10:00	Day 8, 17:00
+2	Day 8, 18:00	Day 9, 03:00

Lump the combatants into units made up of five men (or orcs) each, then conduct combat with the unit as if it were a single entity. Units made up of more than five individuals can be used if convenient, but five-man units work well for this scenario. To use the "lumping" technique, each unit must contain the same number of individuals. All of the members of a given unit must have the same weapons, hp, AC, etc., and individuals in the opposing units should be roughly the same size.

Use one miniature to represent each five-man unit. PCs and important NPCs should be represented by individual miniatures. If any PCs or important NPCs are involved in a combat, use the normal AD&D combat rules. Reverting to the normal AD&D rules for PC combats creates an additional burden for the DM, but it helps to keep the action personal for the players.

Two five-man units can occupy a space 10 yards on a side. This is the scale used in the BATTLESYSTEM rules, where 1" = 10 yards. Use the normal hand-to-hand combat rules (*DMG*, page 57) to determine the number of figures able to attack. For example, if two five-man units occupy a square 10 yards by 10 yards, up to six units of similar size could attack the central units. Normal combat modifiers (cover, concealment, darkness, surprise, etc.) also apply. Handle missile weapon combat in the same fashion, applying all normal missile weapon combat adjustments. The BATTLESYSTEM rules use a similar, more sophisticated technique for resolving large-scale combats.

The DM and the players will need some method of keeping track of each figure's remaining hit points. The quick method for tracking hit points is to attach a small tag to each figure, labeling it as figure "A," figure "B," etc. Any method of identifying an individual unit will suffice. Make a list on a separate piece of paper and records damage to each unit as it occurs. The DM should keep track of the hit points for the orcs and appoint one of the players to keep track of hit points for the freeholders.

Example: Unit A consists of five human **light infantrymen** (AC 6; MV 9; F1; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; studded leather armor, shield, short sword). Unit B consists of orcish **medium infantry** (AC 5; MV 9; HD 1; hp 5; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; ring mail, shield, axe).

Using the normal initiative rules, unit A (the humans) wins initiative. For their attack, they roll a 17 and score a hit. For damage, they roll a 4. Each orc in unit B takes 4 hp damage. During unit B's attack phase, the orcs score a hit with a roll of 15 and do 5 hp damage. Each human in unit A takes 5 hp damage. Combat continues in this fashion until one of the units reaches 0 hp, at which time all its members are considered dead and its counter is removed from the playing surface.

Morale

Ideally, all morale-check situations that come up during this adventure should be handled without rolling any dice. See the *DMG*, page 69. Determine the morale of the orcs based on their motivation for the attack. The orcs are willing to go to great lengths to destroy Kratys Freehold, home of one of their most hated enemies. As long as there is a possibility that the orcs can kill Tarran Kratys and destroy his home, they will continue to fight. Captain Hallir is motivated to do his best in this fight because he does not want to lose honor with his tribe by being defeated.

The players will be in charge of the freeholder NPCs in this adventure (see "Siege Timetable") and will have total control over the freeholders' actions, including determining their reactions to the orc attack. The freeholders' morale should remain strong; they are defending their home, and they have a defensive terrain advantage: the freehold itself. The freeholders would never surrender to the orcs (except possibly as a ruse), because they know that the orcs would not grant them a pleasant fate.

Possible Player Actions

This list covers some of the ideas that the players may come up with for their PCs to defend the freehold. You must judge the outcome of other actions, such as using a *speak with animals* spell to convince the cats, ducks, cows, and sheep to help stand watch. If the players think of rolling water barrels down the hill at the orcs, you should decide if and when the orcs charge. Most actions are open to DM interpretation, such as the effectiveness of broken pottery and glass sprinkled at the base of a wall to slow down a charge. The options open to the players are too varied to cover in detail. You should make decisions based on past experience and the information that follows.

Normally, each adult can supply 16 man-hours of work in a day; children can supply 8 man-hours per day. As an aid to keeping track of the freehold manpower, the players should write out a detailed list of who is doing what task. Making such a list can become a very boring task if the players are not interested in this sort of detail. The manpower list is not meant to make play bog down and become tedious. It should ensure that the freeholders don't "make a thousand caltrops, dig a moat around the freehold, water down every flammable surface, and have 20 people on the walls at all times, watching the orcs."

Consult the following list if the PCs decide to attempt any of the actions listed below.

Heal Tarran Kratys. At the beginning of the orc attack (see "Siege Timetable"), Tarran is severely wounded. He needs at least 16 hp of healing before he can leave his bed and join in the fighting. Even then, he will move at half speed. If healed of more than 24 hp damage, Tarran can move at full speed.

The PCs may have a healing spell they can use, or the players could opt to give Tarran one (or both) of the healing potions mentioned in the statistics for Myrs.

Wet down roofs, stockade walls, and other flammable areas with water, to cut down on the risk of fire. The freehold has plenty of water, thanks to its interior well. Thoroughly soaking all exposed surfaces takes 50 man-hours and gives all structures a +1 on saves vs. fire. The children can be used to accomplish this task. The PCs do not know that the orcs are reluctant to use fire, so they will probably waste a lot of manpower doing this.

Make caltrops. Nails can be made into caltrops at a rate of 20 caltrops per man-hour. Brand the smith must be one of the people assigned to this task. If a PC with the blacksmithing proficiency helps out, double the rate of production.

Each group of 100 caltrops covers a 10′×10′ section of ground. At least 100 caltrops must be put into a 10′×10′ area in order to be effective. Any unit of infantry moving through an area covered with caltrops takes one hit (as if AC 8; THAC0 20 for caltrops) for 1-4 hp damage. Once a unit has taken damage from moving through a caltrop-strewn area, the caltrops can do no further damage.

Reinforce gates, walls, and other structures. For every 10 man-hours spent reinforcing a wall, a 10′ long section of wall gets a +1 cumulative bonus on saves vs. the light catapult (maximum bonus of +2). If the PCs decide to reinforce the rear wall (area 10F), the wall will resist the orcish catapult for a longer time than listed in the "Wall Destruction" table.

Reinforcing a door requires 10 man-hours of work and gives the door a +1 bonus vs. blows (maximum bonus of +2). Saving throws for specific doors are listed in the freehold building descriptions. Myrs or Llewyn must be assigned to any crew that is reinforcing structures. During this time, Myrs (or Llewyn) cannot engage in any other tasks. If a PC with the engineering proficiency helps out, halve the time required to reinforce structures.

Construct archery blinds. The tower and the catwalks provide excellent cover for archers, but the PCs may wish to construct additional shelters on top of the barn, main hall, stable, etc. Blinds can be constructed using hay bales, pieces of wood, sacks filled with dirt, etc. Construction of a blind capable of sheltering one archer takes one man hour. Archery blinds provide 75% cover to anyone inside (−7 to AC). The children can be used to accomplish this task, as long as they have at least one adult present as a supervisor.

Refit chain mail. The five suits of chain mail armor on the equipment list are unusable now, but Brand can repair them at a rate of one suit every two hours. While he repairs chain mail, Brand cannot engage in any other task, such as making caltrops. If Brand gets help from any PC with the leatherworking or armorer proficiency, the rate of repair doubles.

If all the armor is repaired, the freehold forces may be able to put forth a unit of AC 4 infantry!

Send for help. If the players ask about people in the area who may be able to help, inform them that Tarran Kratys knows of two options. The PCs can send a messenger to one (or both) of these possible sources of aid.

If the PCs send a freeholder NPC as a messenger, the freeholder successfully evades the orcs on his way out. If one of the PCs goes with the messenger (or acts as the messenger), you can spice things up with an encounter with one unit of orcish medium infantry at the edge of the orchard. Further encounters during the journey are best left to the DM's discretion.

One potential source of aid is Gleakin, an old druid who is friendly to the freeholders. He lives in a forest glade two days' travel (on foot) east of the freehold. Three days after a messenger is dispatched to summon him, Gleakin shows up at the freehold (he uses a *fly* spell from a scroll given to him by a mage friend). Once Gleakin gets to the freehold, the players should control his actions.

Gleakin (human male, age 62): AL N; AC 7; MV 12; D5; hp 25; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 8, D 12, C 14, I 11, W 16, Ch 15; spear. Spells: *animal friendship, cure light wounds, entangle, faerie fire, shillelagh, charm person or mammal, goodberry, obscurement, resist fire, speak with animals, call lightning.* Nonweapon proficiencies: carpentry, healing, herbalism.

One day's hard travel (on foot) west of the freehold lies Karos Freehold, a farm much like Tarran's. The two freeholds are friendly and have helped each other in the past. If the PCs decide to send someone to Karos Freehold for help, two units of **medium infantry** (AC 5; F1, F2 leader; hp 7 (×9), 13; short swords, spears, long bows) arrive in the area two days after the messenger leaves Kratys Freehold. Once the Karos freeholders arrive, the DM should retain control of their actions until the players either come up with a scheme that succeeds in getting the newly arrived Karos freeholders safely into Kratys Freehold, or they establish reliable communications with the Karos freeholders.

Tarran does not think that the Volkrad Army will be able to provide any help, considering the troubles in L'Trel at the moment. In addition, the freehold is more than five days away from the nearest army garrison.

Memorize spells. The players may decide to have Myrs change her current spell selection. Because of the life-threatening circumstances, Myrs will allow PC mages to memorize spells from her books, but only under her watchful eye.

Mount a watch. A 24-hour watch covering 360° requires one dedicated unit (five people), the telescope, and at least one *continual light* stone (see equipment list). At least two people must watch from the top of the tower, and another person must watch from one of the freehold walls. The remaining members of the watch sleep while not on duty, so that fresh people are always available for rotation.

By mounting a daytime watch for at least eight hours, the people on watch can estimate that the attacking force consists of at least 100 orcs.

Short sleep: The freeholders can skip sleep in order to accomplish more work. If the players opt to do this, the force marching rules (*Player's Handbook,* page 120) can be adapted to determine the effect. For each day that the freeholders go short on sleep, they can accomplish 20 man-hours of work per adult and 10 man-hours of work for each child. At the end of a "short-sleep" work-day, the freeholders must pass a constitution check as if they had engaged in a force march or suffer the applicable penalties (−1 to attack rolls, no further short sleep until rested). See the *PHB,* page 120.

Running the Orcs

In this adventure, the players are in charge of the defending forces, and you are in charge of the attacking orcs. Because you must act as both judge and adversary, be careful not to let the two roles overlap. As the judge of the adventure, you will know all about the freeholders' preparations and plans. It is important for you to keep this information separate from what the orcs could legitimately know.

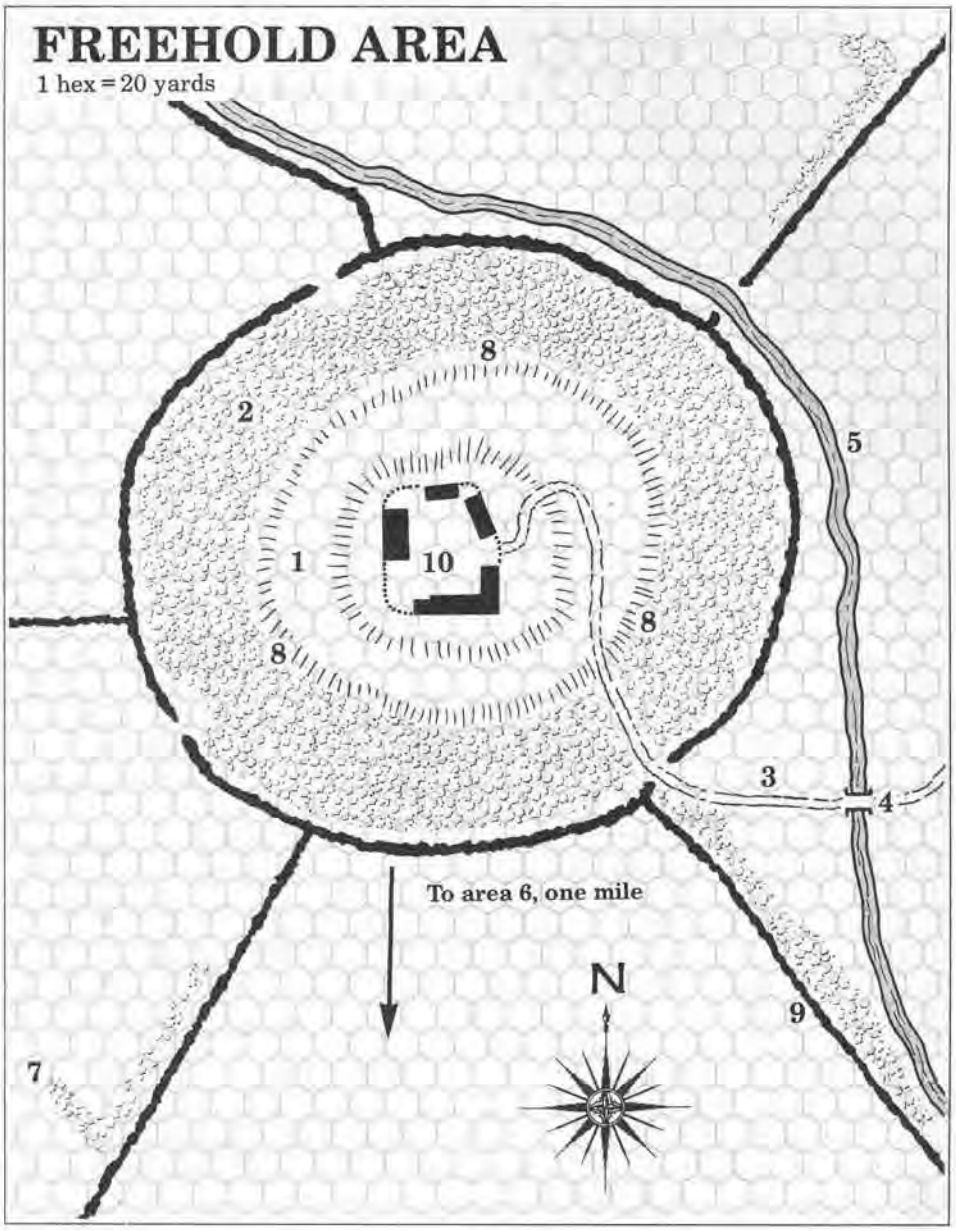
Hallir, the orcish commander, hopes to wrap up the siege within four days. He is uncertain when the army will resume patrolling the border, and he does not want to be in the valley when the patrols do start up again. Also, if the orcs are here longer than four days, Hallir will have to assign three of his medium infantry units to foraging detail, to supply his attack force with food.

If the players come up with enough ideas to make the siege last longer than four days, you should continue attacking the freehold, using the actions presented in the Siege Timetable as a basis for deciding how the orcs will behave. Keep careful track of the orc-hours expended. Orcs can provide 18 orc-hours of work in a day, 21 hours if they go on "short sleep." Don't go overboard to prepare an orc-hour list accurate to the minute; a few generalities should suffice.

The orcs have many methods they could use to attack the freehold. The Siege Timetable gives a rough outline of one possible attack plan that depends heavily on the use of the orc's light catapult. If the PCs come up with a way to disable the catapult, modify the orc attack plan. For instance, Hallir could fall back on one of the following options:

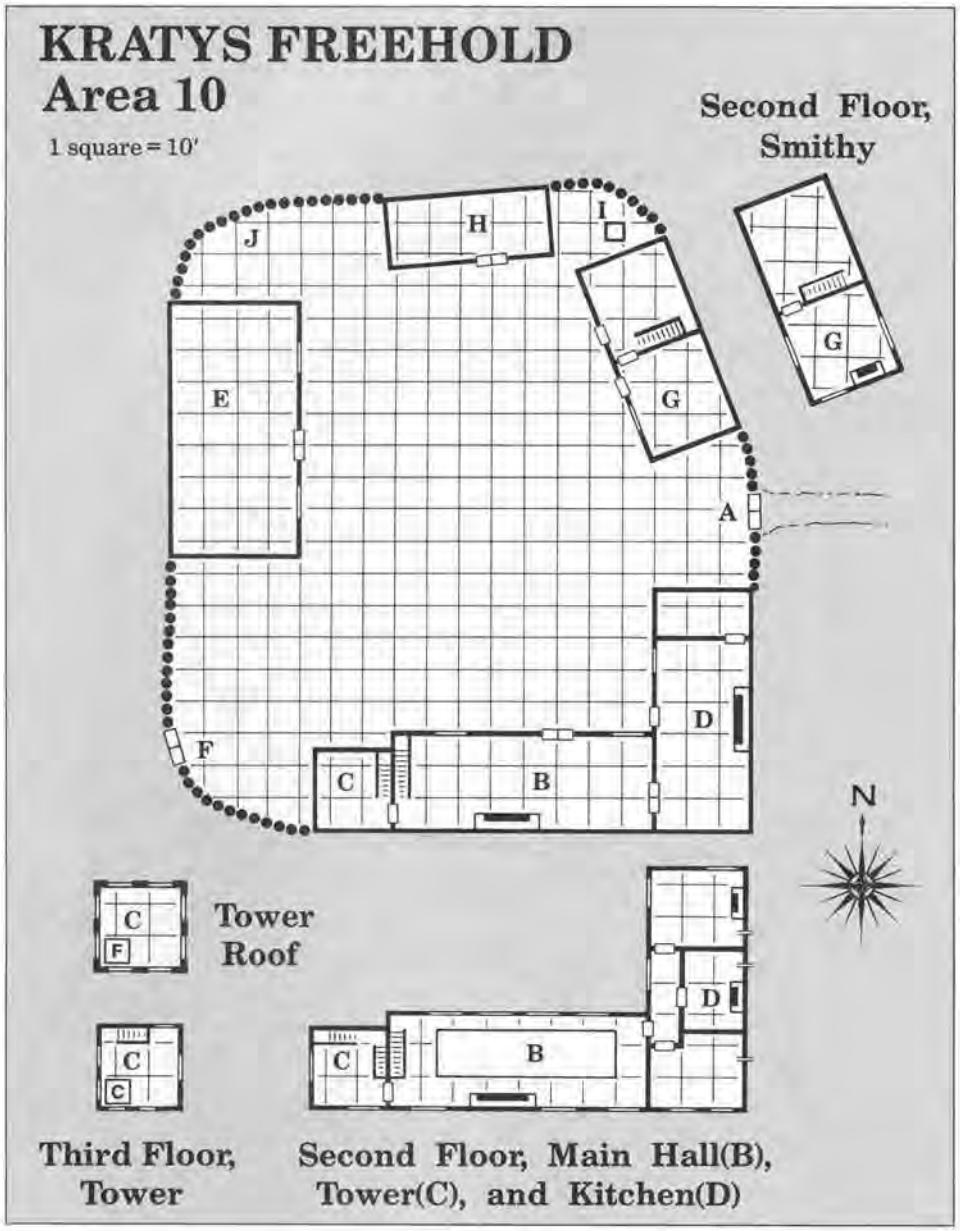
Scaling Ladders. The orcs could use their scaling ladders to launch a massive night-attack on the freehold. One orc can climb each ladder per melee round. The orcs have 50 ladders, so they can send 10 units of infantry over the freehold wall every round! The freeholders may be able to kick over some of these ladders (open-doors roll required, one man per ladder), slowing the assault, but they won't be able to get to all of the ladders in time.

Covered Battering Ram. The orcs can fashion a covered battering ram out of the raw materials at hand. It will take the orcs two hours to make a covered battering ram, or one hour if Bo the ogre helps out. The orcs can then use the ram to batter down the front gates. Two units of medium infantry are required to operate the ram. Orcs under the ram's cover have a −4 adjustment to their AC.



Starve the Freeholders. With the orcs blockading the freehold, none of the people can get in or out. The attack can degenerate into a classic siege, where the attackers simply wait for the besieged people to starve to death. The freehold could probably last at least a month, because it has lots of food and a good source of water. This option is Hallir's last resort, because he has several good reasons for not wanting to linger in the area for too long (the return of Volkrad's army is his chief worry). Hallir would rather go out in a blaze of glory than admit that Tarran Kratys defeated him simply by waiting.

Fire. Hallir could order his troops to set fire to the orchard and the surrounding croplands. Because it is late in the dry season, the orchard would catch fire easily. The resulting blaze would very likely destroy the freehold and kill everyone in it (DM's discretion). Hallir would rather not use this tactic, for several reasons. There is the danger of



wildfire sweeping across the valley and endangering his troops. Also, if the fire destroys the freehold, it deprives the orcs of the opportunity to loot the freehold and gather new slaves.

If the orcs make an organized retreat, they take their wounded with them. As they leave, they strip their dead of armor, weapons, and valuables, although they will miss looting one out of five bodies. You'll have to do some figuring to calculate how much treasure, armor, and weapons the freeholders can recover. If the freeholders rout the orcs from the field or force them to flee, the orcs leave their wounded behind and do not bother to strip the dead.

Orc Personnel Roster

The attacking orc force consists of a number of five-orc units of various types, plus leaders. All of the soldier-orcs have 5 cp and 5 sp (in orcish coins), and 2 gp worth of cheap gold or silver jewelry. Unless otherwise noted, armor and weapons taken from the orcs can be sold in L'Trel (or any other large city) for half the *PHB* list price.

Unless otherwise listed, all orcs have the following statistics:

Orc: INT average; AL LE; HD 1; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; XP 15 (35 with missiles); MC; infravision (60'); −1 penalty to hit during daylight.

Hallir, half-orc captain: AC 4; MV 9; F5; hp 52; THAC0 16; S 17, D 9, C 16, I 13, W 14, Ch 8 (17); XP 270; *bastard sword +1.* The charisma score in parentheses is Hallir's charisma to other orcs. He has a dagger worth 50 gp, a decorated helmet, a medium shield, chain mail armor, and jewelry worth a total of 100 gp.

Hallir is an extremely capable and canny military commander. He fights to win, and he will do whatever he must in order to succeed. His human heritage gives him a slightly different temperament than most orcish commanders, and his superiors have criticized him for being "far too soft" on his orcs. However, he wins battles consistently, and the orcish high command is pragmatic enough not to argue with results. Hallir never got a chance to match wits with Tarran during Tarran's army days (he was too young), but he is going to do his best now to redeem the name of his clan.

Goomjaba, orc shaman: AC 8; MV 12; C5; hp 19; THAC0 18; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 14, D 12, C 13, I 9, W 15, Ch 5 (15); XP 420; leather armor, morning star. The charisma score in parentheses is Goomjaba's charisma to other orcs. Spells: *bless, cause fear, cure light wounds, detect snares & pits, protection from good, chant, hold person, silence 15' radius, spiritual hammer, prayer.* Goomjaba wears 200 gp in jewelry.

Goomjaba actively supports Hallir, which makes him a highly unusual orc shaman. In most cases, a substantial amount of friction exists between the clerical and warrior branches of the orcish hierarchy. Goomjaba has discovered that if he cooperates with Hallir, their battles go much better, to the greater glory of the tribe.

Bo, ogre: INT low; AL LE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 26; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +4; S 18(78); SZ L; XP 175; huge plate mail, huge flail (3-12 hp dmg). Bo's armor and weapon can be sold for 1½ times the *PHB* value. Bo also has a gold-studded belt worth 75 gp, and a set of studded silver bracers worth 50 gp.

Bo is a member of the "Really Heavy Infantry." The orcs of the Blood Rune

Tribe adopted Bo when he was an infant no bigger than an orc (thus his alignment is lawful evil rather than an ogres' normal chaotic evil) and trained him to be a fighting machine.

Orc archers (four units light infantry): AC 6; MV 9; hp 5 (×20); studded leather armor, shield, long bow, sheaf and flight arrows (unlimited supply), axe, dagger.

Orcish **medium infantry** (16 units): AC 5; MV 9; hp 6 (×60), 8 (×20); scale mail, shield, sling, sling bullets and stones (unlimited supply), spear, axe, dagger.

Orcish heavy infantry (two units): AC 4; MV 9; hp 8 (×10); chain mail, shield, morning star, long sword.

If the average of the PC levels is greater than 2½, make the following additions to the orc forces:

1 unit heavy infantry
2 units medium infantry
1 unit archers
1 lieutenant

Orc lieutenant: AC 4; MV 9; HD 2; hp 18; THAC0 19; XP 35; chain mail, shield, hand axe, spear, dagger. All of the lieutenant's weapons are worth twice the *PHB* value because of their workmanship.

If the average of the PCs levels is greater than 3½, double the number of additional units and give all of the orcs in the infantry units one additional hit point.

Freehold Area Key

1. Hill. The freehold perches on the top of a small 50'-high hill that is barren of all vegetation except low grass and some flowers. The freeholders keep the hillside clear so that it cannot provide cover for attackers. The clearing extends out from the freehold walls about 50 yards down the hill's 20° slope.

2. Orchard. The freeholders grow both fruit and nut trees in the orchard. The trees on outer edge of orchard were planted when Tarran Kratys retired to the freehold, so they are all 1-4 years old and 3'-10' tall. The inner trees are much older, and some of them are as tall as 40'. These trees were planted by the freehold's original owners. The orchard starts at the bottom of the hill and extends outward for about 75 yards. Any of the larger trees can provide good cover (a −7 adjustment to AC). The smaller trees provide much less cover, giving only a −2 adjustment to AC.

3. Road. The road is a gravel path that varies from 8'-10' wide. It widens out once it reaches the top of the hill, until it is about 20' wide at the freehold gates. The freeholders maintain their road with great care, to make it easy for them to get wagons up and down the hillside.

4. Bridge. The freeholders have built a log bridge across the stream at this point. The bridge is just wide enough for one wagon to cross, and it does not have rails. Using the bridge saves the freeholders a considerable amount of time in getting back and forth to the fields.

5. Stream. The stream flows to the north. It runs along the base of the hill in a channel 15' deep and 30' wide. The stream itself varies from 2'-3' deep and 10'-15' wide. For most of the year, the stream teems with fish. It can be crossed on foot, but crossing anywhere other than the bridge takes one full round.

6. South Field. This field is located more than a mile from the freehold itself. It is on the edge of Kratys Freehold's cultivated lands and has several stands of trees around its edges. The orcish scouting party that surprised Tarran and his compatriots at the beginning of the siege shot arrows from the cover of these trees.

7. Orc Camp. The orcs make their camp and set up their catapult here. People in the freehold cannot observe this area directly, because 30'-35' tall trees screen this area from view.

8. Orc Archer Blinds. The orcs set up archer blinds at each of these three positions. See the "Siege Timetable" for more details.

9. Stone Fence. Stone fences like this one separate the fields. The stones have been pulled from the earth and carefully piled in fences 3'-4' high and 1'-3' thick. This practice gets the stones out of the fields, but it also leaves the attacking orcs with a ready supply of ammunition for their catapult.

10. The Freehold. Unless otherwise noted, all rooms in the freehold are equipped with one or more small lanterns to provide illumination. Each lantern consist of an opaque box holding a stone with a *continual light* spell cast upon it. Shutters on the box can be manipulated to control the amount of light emitted.

All of the freehold buildings have access to the roof by trapdoor or ladder. Each roof provides a convenient platform for one unit of archers. Archers on the roofs have no AC adjustment (unless the freeholders construct archery blinds there).

No window in the freehold is larger than 2' wide by 4' high, and most are smaller. All windows can be closed with heavy wooden shutters. The windows are neither set with glass nor covered with parchment or hide. Archers can shoot arrows from the cover of the windows with a −4 adjustment to their armor class.

10A. Front gates. The front gates open onto the freehold road. Each half of the gate is 5' wide and fashioned of heavy, iron-bound oak secured on the inside by two oak beams. Each beam requires two men to lift. The gates have a saving throw of 8 vs. blows from a ram. The right-hand gate has a small window that is covered with a movable brass plate that can be opened so that those inside can look out. The freeholders usually close the front gates at sunset and do not open them again until dawn. One guard is posted here during the night, whether times are troubled or calm.

10B. Main Hall. The main hall serves as the primary living space for the freehold personnel. The freeholders eat here, and some of them sleep here. The hall is cleared out on social occasions to provide a dance space. Currently, sturdy trestle tables take up most of the floor space, and colorful tapestries hang from the walls. A large fireplace dominates the outer (southern) wall. The staircase provides access to the second floor of the tower, the gallery that runs around the main hall, and the bedrooms located above the kitchen-wing.

The gallery is a 5' wide wooden floor that runs around the perimeter of the main hall, 10' above the main floor. The gallery has rails all around its inner edge. The walls provides some support for the gallery floor, and large wooden posts provide the rest. The gallery fur-

nishes a limited amount of storage and extra sleeping space in a pinch. This area would make an ideal ambush spot; archers on the gallery would not be spotted by troops rushing into the main hall until far too late.

10C. Tower. From this tower, with its impressive view of the surrounding countryside, the freeholders keep watch for approaching enemies. The top of the tower is a little over 80' above ground level, counting the height of the hill. A narrow staircase (2' wide) runs from the ground floor to the third floor of the tower. A ladder and trapdoor lead from the third floor to the roof.

The roof has enough crenellations to provide 90% cover for two five-man units of archers (−10 to armor class). A small shed mounted on the roof houses a bronze alarm bell that is audible for miles. The roof also has a gutter system that channels rainwater into barrels in case of a prolonged attack (see also area 10I, the well).

The tower also serves as a secondary storage building. It is crammed full of grain, tools, and foodstuffs, including sufficient dried food and stored water to feed 30 people for two weeks. Thin wooden screens partition off odd corners of the tower's first and second floors. The screened-off areas serve as living quarters for some of the freeholders; one spot on the first floor is the privy.

All of the tower doors are made of oak reinforced with iron bars. Breaking down any of the tower doors requires a ram wielded by at least 10 man-sized creatures. The door has a saving throw of 9 vs. blows from a ram (roll 1d20 each round; if the result is less than 9, the door falls). Such a ram can be used once per round. The tower walls are made of thick, strong stone and are unlikely to fall in a reasonable amount of time to anything short of a ballista, a determined attack by a giant, or a sapping tunnel.

XP Awards

Time (hours) to Complete Scenario	XP award to each PC
less than 4	700
5	500
6	375
7	275
8	200
more than 8*	150

*or if freehold forces are defeated.

10D. Kitchen, Storage, and Myrs's Laboratory. The freehold has a large and generous kitchen that contains utensils not normal for food preparation because the area doubles as a lab for Myrs. The kitchen is equipped with a large stone fireplace as well. The room is a bit smaller and warmer than the main hall, so it serves as a living space on cold winter nights.

The storage room at the far end of the kitchen is filled from floor to ceiling with all sorts of items. A narrow path winds through the stacks of goods.

10E. Barn. Most of the freehold's supplies are stored here, along with large stocks of animal fodder, wood, etc. The barn provides shelter for some of the animals, and several of the freeholders have their quarters here. Travelers who purchase a night's lodging from the freehold usually stay in the barn. This building has sturdy stone walls and a sloped shale roof. A trapdoor in the top of the hayloft provides access to the roof, whose peak is 25' above ground level.

10F. Back gate and Log Wall. The back gates are primarily used for driving the freehold's animals in and out of the freehold compound. The back gate is of the same type of construction as the front gate. These gates have a saving throw of 10 vs. blows from a ram. This gate is always closed at sunset.

10G. Smithy. This building is Brand's domain. The smithy contains a forge, metal bars, blacksmithing tools, armorers' tools, and many other tools that it takes to keep this isolated farm running smoothly.

There are several rooms above the smithy. One of them serves as quarters for Brand and two freeholders who work with him in the smithy. The other room is dedicated to storage and work space.

10H. Stable. The stable provides space for half the horses and most of the waterfowl. It also serves as a place to store additional animal fodder and hay.

10I. Well. A stone cap, 5' on a side, covers the opening to the well. A wooden, 3' square trapdoor in the cap provides access to the water below. There is also a windlass for hauling up 10-gallon buckets of water. The well is about 80' deep. Its water is furnished by a deep, plentiful aquifer, so the well is essentially an unlimited source of clean water (see also area 10C, the tower).

Myrs has used her engineering skills to develop a sewage system for the freehold that keeps sewage from flowing anywhere near the well (see area 10C).

10J. Log Walls. The freehold walls are constructed of stout timbers, 12"-16" in diameter, driven deep into the ground. The walls are 10' high. A catwalk runs along all of the log walls at a height of 6' above ground. Ladders are placed at 20' intervals to provide ready access to the catwalk. Archers on the catwalk have a −4 adjustment to armor class (50% cover), or a −10 adjustment if they duck down (90% cover).

Concluding the Adventure

The nature of this scenario makes it very difficult to assess the impact of the PCs' presence at the freehold. What portion of the credit for the outcome, be it victory or defeat, belongs to the PCs? To reward the players for running the freeholders as well as their own PCs, use the "XP Awards" table to determine the experience-point award to the PCs.

Consider any scenario where more than 50% of the freeholders survive a victory for the freeholders. However, the freehold can lose more than 50% of its people and still win, provided the freeholders retain possession of the freehold.

If at any time the DM spends longer than five minutes reaching a decision or consulting a reference, do not count this time against the time taken to complete the scenario. If you add units to the basic orc forces, add 20 XP per additional unit to the awards shown in the sidebar. Orc officers, ogres, and similar additions each count as a full unit for purposes of determining experience points. Be sure to apply the bonus experience-point awards shown on page 46 of the *DMG*.

In addition to the pay the PCs receive from Tarran, all PCs who participated in the siege are entitled to a share of any loot recovered from the bodies of the orcs. The freeholders will insist on setting aside an equal share of loot for every person who took part in the fighting (the PCs should each get approximately 1/30th of the recovered goods). Shares for the deceased are passed on to the victim's family (this is standard army practice.) Note that most of the

orc treasure consists of armor and weapons that can be converted to gp by selling them in a large city.

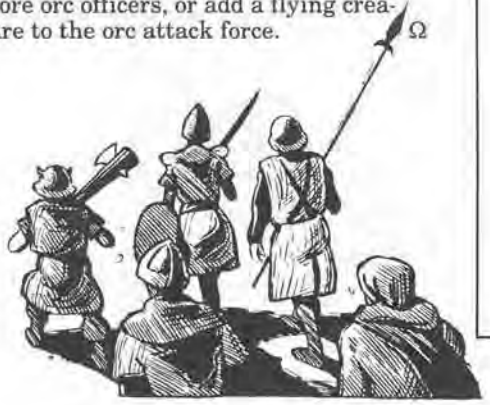
If orcs overrun the freehold, they slaughter Tarran and his immediate family. The orcs may keep some of the freeholders (and the PCs) as slaves or may hold them for ransom. The orcs will thoroughly loot the freehold and take as many of the farm animals with them as they can.

If the freehold survives and the orcs are driven off, Tarran happily gives fighter PCs level training in the future, either at no charge or at a greatly reduced cost. Myrs is willing to train PC mages under the same conditions. At the DM's option, Myrs may let a PC mage copy one (and only one!) first- or second-level spell from her books.

Tarran and Myrs Kratys are well-respected people in Volkrad and have several friends in high places. If Tarran and Myrs tell their friends about the excellent job the PCs did, the PCs are sure to get many offers of employment.

You can easily convert "The Siege of Kratys Freehold" into a form suitable for use with the BATTLESYSTEM rules. However, this is not recommended. Although the battle is large, the rule modifications contained in this module should allow the scenario to be completed without using the BATTLESYSTEM rules. If you don't use BATTLESYSTEM, use five-man units, instead of 10-man units, because the freehold forces are small. During any combat involving a PC, revert to the normal AD&D rules.

At the DM's option, this adventure can be modified to make it suitable for PCs of up to 6th level (24-36 total levels). The attacking orc forces must be strengthened by adding more orcs to the assault force, having the orcs assemble multiple catapults, adding ogres or more orc officers, or add a flying creature to the orc attack force. Ω



Continued from page 2

apprentices; an alchemist who isn't crazy or absent-minded; an oracle or prophecy adventure that doesn't railroad the PCs; sea-going (not underwater) adventures; and an Underdark adventure without drow. I'd also like to mention that most of the RAVENLOFT™ material we've seen could really be set anywhere. Make sure that your proposals take full advantage of the Gothic setting and can reduce players to a state of stark terror.

The mail on specific world adventures vs. generic settings has been fairly steady, but keep those letters coming. What do you think of the above suggestions? Would you want to read these adventures, even if you don't use them? Should every adventure be easily adapted to any world, or should exotic ideas take precedence over adaptability? I'd like to hear from you!

Wolfgang Baur

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DARK DAYS IN WELLDALE

BY J. MARK BICKING

Their well was cursed, they said—but the truth was far, far worse.

Illustrations by David O. Miller

Mark says, "This adventure was written when I started to consider how folklore and fantasy might mix. How would a naive, nonmagical people react to and explain sudden, strange events? I added a little humor along the way, and I hope the readers enjoy the result."

"Dark Days in Welldale" is an AD&D® adventure for 5-6 characters of levels 3-5 (about 22 total levels). A party of primarily good alignments, including a ranger or druid, is best suited for this scenario. A halfling PC would be warmly received by the inhabitants of Welldale and helpful in dealing with the odd individuals living there.

Because of the nature of the creatures encountered and the relative self-sufficiency of the halfling village, the group cannot expect to exit this adventure with a great deal of treasure. For this reason, players satisfied by having their characters perform good deeds, protect the defenseless, and rid the land of evil are most likely to enjoy this scenario.

Encounters in the halfling community require role-playing and a great deal of patience on the part of the players. Detective work, problem-solving, and creativity are just as important as combat if the party hopes to complete this adventure successfully.

Welldale and the surrounding forest can fit easily into any campaign world. This module is designed to be placed between larger adventures or run as an extended random encounter if the DM so chooses.

The crystal drake appearing in this adventure is described in detail, but DMs wanting more information can refer to David E. Cates' article, "Dragons Are Wizards' Best Friends," in DRAGON® issue #146 (June 1989). This article elaborates on the drake's spell-like powers, gained from eating specific gems.

Adventure Background

Once upon a time, a merry little band of halflings decided to see the world, a decision that was met with scorn from their more contented and sedentary comrades. Considered inquisitive even by halfling standards, the rebellious youths packed themselves a nice big lunch and bid farewell to home and friends. Several older and more eccentric villagers, outcasts who saw the

chance for acceptance and a fresh start, decided to tag along. Departing to a chorus of taunts and catcalls, the "adventurers" were made more resolute by mocking claims that they would be back before the day was through.

Traveling afoot for most of the day, the halflings were quite pleased with themselves, speculating at great length about what a fascinating story their journey would make and how foolish their critics would feel when they returned wealthy and powerful. They remained content until their food ran out and it started to get dark, when their grand scheme rather quickly lost its initial appeal.

The shivering, timid halflings, determined not to return in disgrace, held out as bravely as possible but began to get very nervous as nightfall approached. Finding themselves alone in the wilderness to starve, freeze, or be eaten by vicious beasts was not part of their original plan, and the travelers were nearly paralyzed by the grim turn of events.

Compounding the problem was the fact that the halflings were quite lost. They had avoided the main road, instead opting for the more adventurous route through the forest, which the halflings dubbed "The Woods of Not Altogether Unusual but Nonetheless Somewhat Scary Noises." In doing so they avoided the forest's most voracious predator (see area K) but lost their bearings and unknowingly drew the attention of quite a different creature. Puck, an ancient crystal drake, decided to have a bit of fun at their expense, and his spontaneous inspiration developed into an elaborate masterpiece of mischief.

The halflings paused to rest and plan their course of action near some ruins at the edge of a forest. Sitting with his back next to an old well, Biff Bunnyfoot wished for a nice plate of biscuits. To his amazement, the biscuits immediately appeared before him, thanks to the spells of the crystal drake hiding *invisibly* within the well.

Thrilled by the prospect of a wishing well (and a magical bakery), the halflings decided to remain in this strange land, hundreds of miles from home (well, it really was only a little over 10 miles). The crystal drake spoke to them in booming, majestic tones, claiming to be the spirit of the well. He demanded tribute (especially apple pies) in exchange for favors—a ruse Puck found to be a truly grand joke, potentially the finest in a lengthy, distinguished lifetime of pranks.

Much to the drake's amusement, the halflings scrambled madly in an effort to comply, thinking themselves to be surely the most fortunate creatures in the world. The crystal drake, who had never quite mastered the art of creating the perfect apple pie with his spell abilities, was thrilled with the halflings' instant compliance. Assured of a continuous supply of his favorite food, as well as a seemingly endless source of chuckles from the gullible halflings, he took a liking to the well, fashioning a temporary lair in the area near the underground stream below.

The relationship between the unseen drake and the halflings was a mutually beneficial one. The halflings launched into a dizzying swirl of productivity from the moment of their discovery. Working tirelessly, and assisted by the spells of the drake (which reinforced their reverence for the "magical" well), the halflings built a comfortable little hamlet for themselves in a surprisingly short period of time. As Puck cast *dig* and *limited wish* spells to hollow out the hills nearby as homes for the halflings, the new residents attacked the most critical tasks, building a large oven and venturing out in search of apples. They named their town The Prosperous Village of Welldale, a Most Pleasant and Wondrous Place to Reside.

In addition to inspiring the halflings to become industrious, the well provided them with an outlet for their hidden dreams. With such an array of eccentric individuals, Puck found his fulfillment of their wishes to be absolutely riotous. The combination of Puck's well-timed, creative spell use and the gullibility of the halfling villagers kept the crystal drake in stitches.

Puck's personal favorite was the daffy little halfling who fancied herself a powerful druid. Pansy was the first of the halflings to reveal a secret dream. When her outlandish appearance, including a "beard" of moss and twigs, failed to convince her fellows that she had gained great powers, the crystal drake accentuated the ruse with *plant growth* spells. With a dramatic flourish, Pansy the druid turned three cartwheels, wiggled her eyebrows, placed her fingers in her ears, and three huge, fully grown apple trees emerged from a newly planted grove. Thus, a legend was born, and the other halflings knocked each other over in a rush to the well to reveal their own secret dreams, proving equally easy targets.

Close to his natural forest lair and family, Puck remained in the well for six months, a span in which each prank outdid previous ones. Unable to resist pranks and pies, his family members joined in occasionally, briefly multiplying the fun or taking Puck's place temporarily when other matters called him away. During that time, Puck revealed himself only to Didi, the charming little halfling girl who brought him pies frequently, and whose innocence won his heart.

After a time, however, the task of tricking the villagers lost its challenge to Puck's well-honed sense of creativity. The crystal drake eventually grew bored and departed to search for new targets for his practical jokes, and to replenish the supply of gems on which he subsists. Leaving behind a small cache of coins and trinkets—tribute from the halflings—Puck promised himself he'd look in on the halflings from time to time.

Unfortunately for Biff Bunnyfoot, it was about this time that he decided the halflings had been underestimating the usefulness of the well, and he resolved to make a more lucrative wish. Collecting himself, he marched boldly up to the empty well and demanded *two* plates of biscuits, with honey.

His wish was met with utter silence, which the villagers took as a disastrous omen, the grim consequence of Biff's greed. A series of unusual, tragic events that occurred soon thereafter reinforced this belief, leaving the superstitious halflings convinced that they had brought a horrible curse upon themselves.

One morning about a week after Biff's ill-fated wish—a week in which Bonnie "Bloomers" Danderduff nearly collapsed from exhaustion after baking 37 apple pies in an effort to appease the angered spirit—the halflings discovered that their treasured well had been stoppered with a mossy patch of earth: the well's ultimate symbol of rejection.

This patch was actually a seal constructed by the well's new inhabitants, a group of meenlocks who had stumbled upon the shaft while tunneling (see area J below). A few nights later, unseen by the other residents of Welldale, a vile, hairy creature dragged away Biff's

young nephew Teddy, who had ventured into the woods to fetch water (see area K). Convinced that the newly cursed well was the source of the disappearance, the halflings insisted that Biff somehow mollify the mysterious occupant. Biff, not entirely pleased with the idea, hurled a pie in the face of mayor Dibble Danderduff before being lowered, kicking and screaming, into the well. Peering curiously over the sides as Biff stomped on the mossy patch, the halflings fled in terror when he was swallowed into the shaft below the seal.

All things considered, it is not a very pleasant time to be living in Welldale.

For the Dungeon Master

The PCs arrive several days after these events have taken place. The tormented occupants of the village ask the party to investigate the strange phenomena and, if possible, remove the curse.

There is a 10% (cumulative) chance daily that Puck will visit Welldale *invisibly* to munch on pies and check on the halflings. The crystal drake, despite his pranks, has a genuine affection for the halflings and is protective and nurturing of them. Awareness of any danger to the halfling village would bring Puck's immediate intervention. The crystal drake knows nothing of the well's new inhabitants and will initially assume that the halflings' concern is over unfulfilled wishes.

If Puck arrives while the PCs are in the village, he will be interested in their presence, particularly if they are examining the well. Initially, Puck remains *invisible* and simply observes, but he will not let any chance at a prank go unfulfilled. This could lead to all sorts of chaos for the party, such as insults hurled from one PC to another (through Puck's *ventriloquism* spell), objects floating out of their backpacks, etc. Keep Puck's spell abilities in mind when determining the types of mischief the crystal drake will perform on the party.

Note, however, that if Puck investigates the well and becomes aware of the meenlocks, he will not interfere with the PCs' attempts to drive the creatures off but will secretly assist the adventurers. Once this task is completed, his mischievous intentions return, but the creature would never knowingly endanger the halflings. Puck's activities while the PCs are in Welldale will be based on

Puck, Crystal Drake
(Great Wyrm)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Any
FREQUENCY: Very rare
ORGANIZATION: Solitary or clan
ACTIVITY CYCLE: Any
DIET: Herbivore
INTELLIGENCE: High
TREASURE: E, Q
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic good

NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 0
MOVEMENT: 9, FL 18 (A)
HIT DICE: 5+3
THAC0: 15
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 bite, 2 claws
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-8/1-4/1-4
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Breath weapon, spells as 14th-level mage
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Invisibility*, spell immunities, ethereal travel, spell use, special minor powers from eating gems
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 35%
SIZE: S (2'6")
MORALE: 14
CHANCE OF:
Speaking: 90%
Magic Use: 50%
Sleeping: 30%
XP VALUE: See text

One dark winter day over 1,000 years ago, a group of poachers, their hunt enhanced by evil magic, tracked and slew a small clan of crystal drakes. The youngest of the clan, grazed by an arrow, fled as his family members sacrificed their lives so that he could escape. Hidden from the invaders, the young drake looked on in revulsion and horror as the hunters stripped the scintillating, crystal-like hides from their prey and joked about the price the skins would bring on the black market.

Wounded and grief stricken, the young crystal dragon wandered aimlessly through the surrounding forest until he collapsed at an isolated waterfall, the lair of a group of faerie dragons. Nursed back to health by the faerie dragons, the orphaned crystal drake, who shared a common heredity with his hosts, was raised as one of their clan and given the name Puck.

Life with his faerie dragon cousins was a godsend to Puck, who grew exceedingly powerful under their tutelage, well beyond the limits of a typical crystal drake. Taught directly by the elder faerie dragons, the now-ancient crystal drake has the spell abilities of a 14th-level mage and has learned to become *invisible* at will, characteristics that make him unlike any other of his kind.

His new family influenced several other changes as well, magnifying Puck's natural love of a good prank and giving him an undeniable appreciation for apple pies, the faerie dragon's greatest delicacy. Puck and the faerie dragon clan have long held a running contest to determine which family member can dream up the most creative and amusing method of gaining one of these prized pies.

Unlike the faerie dragons, Puck's hide glimmers with the colors of the rainbow and grants him an unusually low armor class and immunity to many spells. When used against the drake, *color spray, energy drain, hypnotic pattern, lightning* (and other electrical attacks like *shocking grasp*), and *sunray* spells are instantly reflected back upon the caster. *Magic missiles* are reflected back to the caster only if the drake makes a saving throw vs. wands, but harm Puck if the saving throw is failed. *Eyebite, prismatic sphere, prismatic spray, prismatic wall,* and *rainbow pattern* spells have no effect. *Light* and *continual light* spells cannot blind Puck but do blind (for 2-12 rounds) anyone within 20' who fails a saving throw vs. spells.

Crystal drakes share faerie dragons' love of practical joke, but most are cautious and choose to play pranks away from their lairs. Puck, however, is much bolder than most of his species because of his age and ability, and is doggedly persistent in his pursuit of the perfect trick. The ancient crystal drake has grown exceptionally powerful and equally mischievous during the course of his 1,200-year existence, with a wide variety of illusions and other tricks designed to enhance his love of mischief.

The following spells are suggested for Puck's use in this adventure. Substitute your own if you choose, but

keep in mind that spells should be selected for mischief potential, not destructive power.

1st level: *Charm person, enlarge, sleep, unseen servant, ventriloquism*
2nd level: *Forget, hypnotic pattern, levitate, misdirection, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter*
3rd level: *Dispel magic, slow, spectral force, suggestion, water breathing*
4th level: *Charm monster, confusion, dig, plant growth*
5th level: *Distance distortion, dream, seeming, transmute rock to mud*
6th level: *Legend lore, permanent illusion*
7th level: *Limited wish*

Crystal drakes love to eat jewels, gems and crystals, and receive a variety of beneficial side-effects from their unusual diet. Only one gem side-effect can function at once, and if a new gem is eaten before the effects of the prior one have expired, the previous benefits are canceled.

Puck, like others of his kind, has a pair of large cheek pouches in which he can store as many as four gems for months at a time to use in emergencies. During the course of this adventure, Puck carries the following gems, which grant him the powers noted below:

Amethyst: Immunity to paralysis and poison for one turn (or cures these effects)
Hematite: Heals 1-4 hp damage, up to four times per day
Beryl: Improves AC by 2 for one turn
Topaz: Creates a *minor globe of invulnerability* around eater for one turn

For more information on the effects of various gems that a crystal drake may eat, see DRAGON® issue #146 or the chart of reputed abilities of certain gems on page 26-27 of the AD&D 1st Edition *Dungeon Masters Guide.*

Puck's keen sense of smell and taste enable him to sense the presence of precious stones within 10'. Puck must consume at least 5 gp worth of gems per week or his hide loses its crystalline sheen and the powers associated with it. Because of this need, Puck lives in a lair of his own away from the faerie dragons, where he stores a large supply of gems. Without the proper diet, Puck loses one point of armor class per week, to a minimum of AC 5. Once he resumes his consumption of gems, Puck gains his armor class back at the same rate. During periods when he is unable to eat gems, there is a cumulative 25% chance each week that Puck will lose his ability to reflect spells back upon the caster.

Puck has the ability to go ethereal once per week, and can use this power to travel to the plane of elemental Earth (where he searches for gems) or to escape capture or death. He speaks his own language, the Common tongue, and (like his faerie dragon cousins) the languages of sprites, pixies, elves, and the birds and animals of the forest near his lair.

Because he learned the ability from the faerie dragon clan, Puck can become *invisible* at will and can attack, use spells, and employ his breath weapons without losing this concealment. The crystal drake never engages in combat unless forced to defend his family or a defenseless forest creature. When forced to fight, Puck can spit acid four times a day with great force and accuracy (gaining a +4 to hit). This acid does double damage against creatures or objects composed of earth, stone, or crystal.

Because of their beautiful and unusual characteristics, crystal drake skins can be used to make leather clothing that flashes in prismatic patterns. Many countries have outlawed the sale of crystal drake hides, but a buyer willing to pay up to 1,000 gp for each unmarred, adult skin can always be found on the black market. Because the hide of a crystal drake is the prime component of a *robe of scintillating colors*, such skins are most prized by wizards.

Note that while crystal drakes can be employed as familiars by high-level wizards, Puck is far too powerful to answer the summons of any mage below 25th level.

Because the PCs are not expected to do battle with the crystal drake, no experience points are given for slaying or harming Puck. The DM should avoid setting up Puck to challenge the party in such a way as to make his demise either expected or necessary. He is a merry prankster, not a sadist or a killer.

the party's success level and the judgment and creativity of the DM.

Unless otherwise specified, each of the halfling villagers has the following statistics:

Halfling villager: AC 10; MV 6; zero level; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA +3 to hit with bow or sling, opponents at −5 to surprise roll; SD +4 to all saving throws, *invisible* in natural vegetation; MC.

For the Player Characters

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The road on which you travel cuts through a heavily wooded isolated locale, and it has been nearly a day since you last saw signs of a populated area. Ahead, atop a hillside covered with thick trees, you see the burned-out husk of a building, but it appears to have been abandoned long ago.
>
> The quiet calm of the forest is shattered by the cries of a young halfling who emerges suddenly from behind one of the thick trees and stumbles to the ground in front of your party. You quickly come to a halt to avoid trampling the lad, who is clearly in great distress.
>
> The scruffy-looking halfling's arms flail about wildly as he attempts to speak, but his speech is nearly incomprehensible because of his heaving sobs. "Please help us. My . . . my village . . . c-c-c-c-c-cursed . . ."

Elmo Berrybottom (LG, hp 1), driven to despair by the events in the village, has fled the community to search for help. The young man eventually explains to the PCs that his small village is located near the ruins. He is nearly hysterical, and it is difficult to get any more information from him other than continued pleas for aid. With considerable effort, the PCs can determine the following sketchy details:

—Two villagers are missing and presumed dead.

—The other townspeople believe the village is cursed (for an unspecified reason).

—The source of the distress apparently has something to do with a well.

If asked any more questions, Elmo is evasive, insisting that the PCs follow him to the village and speak to his elders.

Welldale

When the adventurers approach the village, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The scene before you is one of great chaos, as a number of strangely garbed halflings participate in a crazed sequence of events. A bizarre-looking villager, dressed in green robes and clearly female despite what appears to be a beard of moss and twigs, stands near an old well, waving a staff and nervously muttering a series of incantations. Her attempt at a spell is disrupted occasionally as she pauses to blow her nose. Surrounding the well are several dozen pies, some of which have grown moldy and rotten.
>
> Several yards away, a single halfling stands spellbound, listening to a second halfling whose fatalistic pronouncements prompt moans and looks of terror from his enthralled audience of one. The speaker's attempts at creating a dramatic tone are sabotaged by his cracking, high-pitched voice and his listener's constant requests for repetition.
>
> Nearby, a gaily dressed halfling plunks out the droning notes of a dirge on a lute that is clearly too large for him.
>
> Just outside the door of one of the halfling homes, a plump female halfling, covered so completely with flour that she resembles a dumpling, threatens a well-dressed but timid male with a rolling pin.
>
> All in all, it is the gloomiest-looking group of halflings you have ever seen.

Unlike typical hairfeet, the halfling villagers of Welldale are cheerless and forlorn. Though possessing average intelligence, they are hopelessly unsophisticated and superstitious about magic. It will take a great deal of time and effort for the PCs to restore some semblance of order, sort out the events that have taken place, and get answers to their questions.

This process is made more difficult by the fact that Dibble Danderduff, the self-appointed mayor of the village, has ordered the villagers not to tell anyone about the "magical" nature of the well, lest an outsider discover it and try to seize control of its powers. The villagers will reveal only the belief that their water supply has been corrupted, so initially it will appear that the halflings are simply overreacting to some ordinary but undefined turn of events.

However, the halflings are surprisingly inept at coordinating their stories, so it may soon become evident to the PCs that not all is being revealed. A halfling PC will be 75% likely to realize immediately from body language, etc., that something is amiss with the details related to the party. Eventually, one of the villagers will slip, and the reaction of the others to the mistake will ruin the halfling's attempts to be discrete, sending Dibble into a tantrum.

Once the true details of the events leading up to the disappearance of the villagers are discussed (from the halfling's mistaken perception, of course), the halflings' spirits will be lightened by the presence of the "heroes," and a flood of information and speculation will follow.

Despite the recent trauma, Welldale is a remarkable little community, particularly considering the age and relative inexperience of its inhabitants. Though naive and susceptible to the drake's pranks, the halflings have been flourishing until the recent troubles. However, much of the credit for this autonomy should be given to the sense of happiness prompted by the well. Now that the crystal drake has disappeared, the community has fallen into a funk that threatens to bring about its collapse. The sulking inactivity of the villagers has left the tiny community in a state of disrepair.

The small, lightly used road upon which the PCs traveled allows the halflings access to a trading town about a day's ride away, where they can sell their wares and purchase the few supplies they need; otherwise, they have everything they need nearby. Small game is plentiful in the nearby forest, and the gardens tended by the "druid" Pansy Berrybottom provide a more than adequate food supply.

The tiny hamlet is built into natural hills, five small mounds that serve as the homes of the halflings. Each grassy home features a thick round door with glass panels for light and small openings atop the hills which serve as chimneys. The interior layout of each mound is not important for the play of this adventure; if necessary, assume that each home has a living area and kitchen as well as several small bedrooms and a storage cellar. The PCs may stay overnight and can sleep within one of the homes, if they do not mind the cramped conditions.

Because of the limited number of mounds, the halflings have a communal living arrangement. The occupants of each mound are as described below, but unless otherwise specified, the NPCs are not in their homes at the time of the party's arrival.

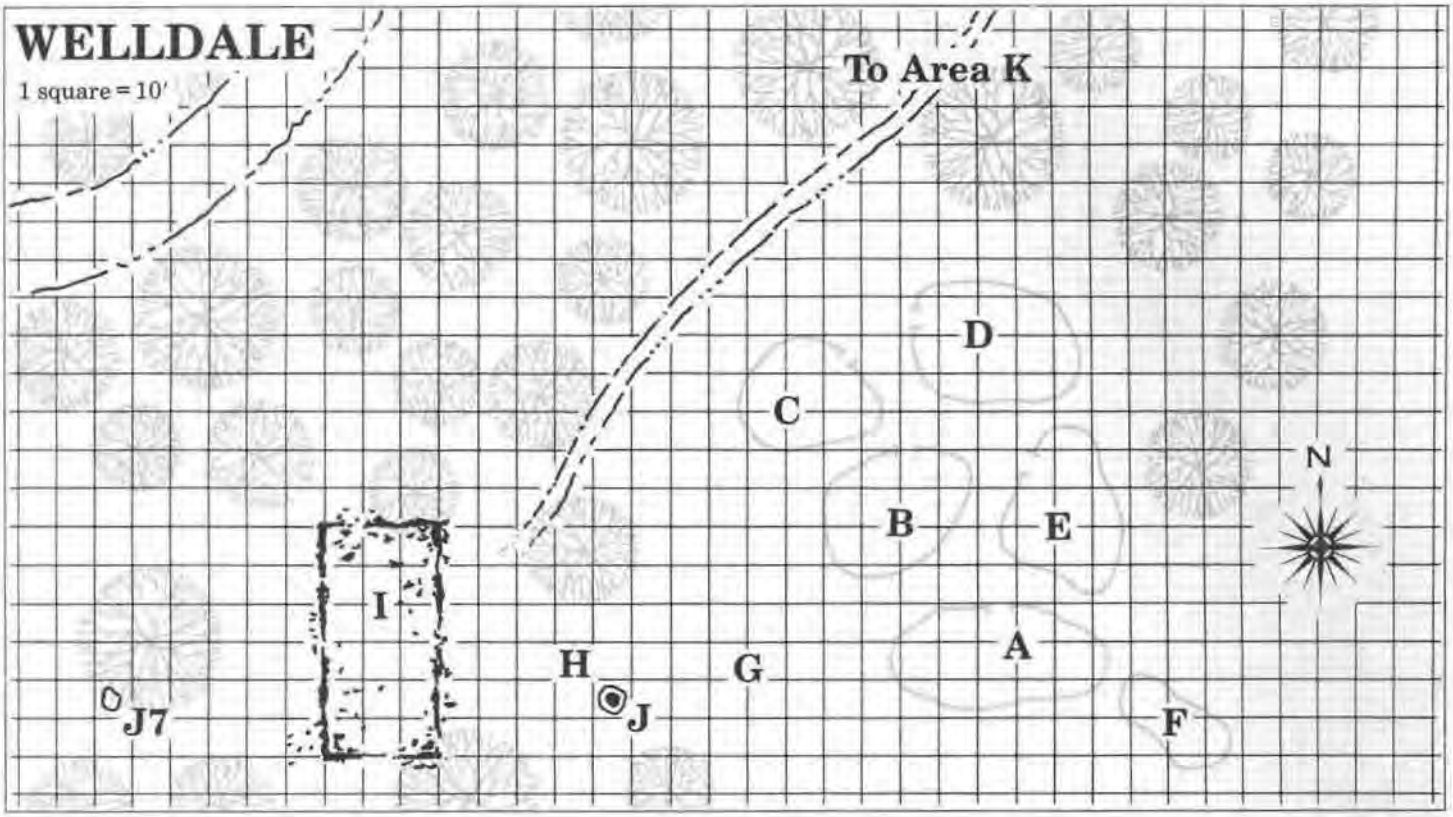
Everyone in Welldale has a theory about why the well "ran dry," although they won't immediately reveal their true thoughts on the matter; this provides a good opportunity for detective work and role playing. Each of the villagers has a different perception of what actually took place on the day of Biff's disappearance, and accounts of what happened include sightings of everything from flame-enshrouded tentacles to the green-scaled arm of a dragon. The DM is free to create as many of these false leads as is necessary. Keep in mind that the villagers will be understandably nervous about the PCs' attempts to investigate the well, as they are concerned that any activity there may further anger the spirit within.

A. Mayor's Mound. The largest of the halfling mounds, this well-kept home serves as the cottage of the "mayor" and his family. **Dibble Danderduff** (LN, hp 3) is a gruff, uncooperative villager who bristles at the prospect of the PCs' presence, for he thinks revealing the well's secret will lead to outsiders seeking the village and ultimately destroying it. As the self-appointed mayor of Welldale (because no one else wanted or saw the need for the job), he has definite thoughts about the way things should be done.

Dibble seeks every opportunity to throw his weight around and will try to disrupt any villager's attempt to admit the truth about the well. Presently, however, he is preoccupied with the reprimand he is receiving at the hands of his wife, Bonnie. As the PCs arrive in the village, they notice him having his ears boxed.

Despite all his blustering about outsiders learning of the well, Dibble secretly wants to establish a money-making venture by turning the well into a tourist attraction.

Dibble's wife, **Bonnie "Bloomers" Danderduff** (CG, hp 2) is responsible for baking the pies that the villagers



offer to the well, and she believes that this activity merits her family higher privileges than those afforded to the remaining halflings. She is the "power behind the throne," for it is her nagging demands that dictate most of Dibble's actions.

Bonnie once delivered the pies herself, because she thought that would bode well for her and her family. One day, curiosity got the best of her, and she lingered behind, hoping to catch a glimpse of what happened to the pies. Puck cast a *levitate* spell on her to teach her a lesson. Shortly thereafter, she was found by the other villagers, standing on her head with her colorful undergarments exposed (which is where she got her nickname).

Bonnie suspects that an overcooked pie she baked is responsible for the curse, but nothing short of torture would ever drag this information from her.

Didi Danderduff (LG, hp 1) is an adorable little girl who has none of her parents' bad traits and is the only villager who knows the truth about the well's original inhabitant. Her charming innocence and bright smile won the crystal drake's heart, and Puck revealed himself to her frequently when she brought him pies. Didi is so young that she does not speak in full sentences, and her parents are so busy with their own concerns that Puck remained confident that she would never give him away, because no one listens to her.

If one of the PCs thinks to gently ask the toddler about the well, she utters the following phrases with a broad, proud smile: "Rainbow," and "He shines." These, of course, are clues regarding the crystal drake's appearance. Ironically, Didi is the one villager whom Dibble will not try to prevent from speaking to the PCs, because he has no idea that she has seen and spoken to the "spirit" of the well.

Didi often draws totally indistinguishable pictures of Puck, and she is working on one such drawing inside her home when the party arrives. A thoughtful PC may ask her about the drawing, prompting her to reveal the information described above.

B. Pifferwiffle Residence. The two oldest villagers, the brothers Pifferwiffle, spend most of the day sleeping, draining the ale cask, and telling highly embellished stories to anyone who will indulge them. Typically, this means that they tell them to each other, but occasionally one of the village children will drop by to sit in on the tales.

"Pockets" Pifferwiffle: AL CN; AC 9; MV 8; T3; hp 8; THAC0 19; S 7; D 17; C 10; I 13; W 9; Ch 11; ML 10; *ring of delusion*.

This grizzled veteran of 65 is the resident pickpocket of Welldale. Pockets is somewhat inept by halfling standards, which is to say that he is still quite good, but he is no longer very energetic and prefers to reminisce about old adventures rather than create new ones.

Nonetheless, he still feels the tug of adventure from time to time, and on one such occasion he approached the well. Convinced that the power to become *invisible* was the quickest path to greatness for a thief, he implored the spirit of the well to provide him with such a gift.

As a result of his request, he now wears a *ring of delusion* given to him by the crystal drake. As Pockets tried on the fabulous gift in front of the mirror he had brought along, Puck cast an illusion on the reflective surface, con-

vincing the halfling that he had actually disappeared.

Deciding that there were not many interesting objects worth pilfering in Welldale, Pockets became a bit of a prankster and is often seen tiptoeing around the village, carrying objects in an effort to make them appear to "float" mysteriously. To this day, he remains convinced he wears a fully functioning *ring of invisibility* but gives himself away because of squeaky shoes.

Pockets' most distinctive feature is a gruesome stump where his right hand used to be, a handicap he insists is a trophy from his battle with a wyvern. The truth is a bit less glamorous; he actually lost the hand to a guillotine trap while trying to rob a merchant's warehouse. When the PCs meet the thief, he will leap at the chance to pass on his fanciful version of the tale to a new, uninitiated audience.

At age 78, **Percy Pifferwiffle** (NG, hp 3) is considered the village sage, and he has kept a daily journal of life in Welldale that he calls "The Book of the Well." This work could be of great value to the PCs if they can tolerate the horrible grammar and misspellings that mar the work. If the party requests an opportunity to read the book, Percy attempts to charge them a small fee, after which he will direct them to his "library" of two other books. The other titles in the collection are *An Encyclopedic History of Radishes* and *Lint: A Guide for the Novice*.

Percy loves to tell grand tales about perfectly ordinary things and shows little regard for the attentiveness of his audience. Therefore, he is often spotted conducting detailed lectures to no audience at all. He is rather hard of hearing and will confuse most of the PCs' requests.

The elderly scholar is fascinated by the visions of the halfling Nostro Nobble (see area E) and is one of the few villagers who will indulge all of the prophet's fatalistic ramblings. He is attending one of Nostro's sermons as the PCs arrive in the village.

C. Bunnyfoot Burrow. This structure, now abandoned, was the home of Biff Bunnyfoot and his nephew Teddy. The PCs will be brought here if they wish to remain in the village and sleep indoors.

D. Berrybottom Residence. The "druid" **Pansy Berrybottom** (N, hp 2) lives here with her husband Bert and their son Elmo, the young lad who met the PCs and begged for their help.

The only thing more outlandish than Pansy Berrybottom's appearance is her claim to be a druid, a belief brought on by a clandestine nocturnal trip to the well. Always a competent gardener, Pansy fell asleep one day while tending her tomatoes and, as a result of Puck's *dream* spell, awoke with the belief that nature had called on her to become the "Mistress of Shrubbery." Informing her husband that she had been summoned to undertake a quest, she departed Welldale and returned several days later with a small sack of apple seeds.

Following the well's bidding, she planted the seeds near the well and began chanting. As the skeptical villagers looked on, a small grove of trees suddenly appeared. Puck nearly split his sides with hysteria when Pansy paused dramatically and said, "Such is the bidding of the well."

Despite her outlandish appearance and equally unusual activities, this "druid" has no powers at all, of course. She has a wild but comical look about her, with hair that is a tangled, matted nest intertwined with flowers and twigs. Strangest of all is her beard of moss, which still has lumps of soil attached.

As a result of Puck's frequently cast *ventriloquism* spells, Pansy thinks the largest of the apple trees speaks to her to reveal the tasks she is to perform. Since Puck's departure, however, the tree has grown strangely silent, and she has taken to sleeping under it in a round-the-clock vigil. This exposure to the elements has given the "druid" a case of the sniffles.

After Biff's disappearance, the villagers begged Pansy to use her powers to intercede in the well crisis. Pansy is beginning to be plagued with self doubts but is putting on a grand show near the well at the time of the party's arrival.

Bert Berrybottom: AL CG; AC 9; F3; hp 12; THAC0 18; S 15; D 17; C 12; I 9; W 10; Ch 13; ML 13; *sling +1*.

Bert is more cynical and clear-headed than the rest of the halflings. He was not in favor of leaving their home village, but he went along grudgingly with his wife's wishes in an effort to preserve their marriage. He is not the least bit fond of Welldale and therefore spends a lot of time away, hunting, purchasing supplies, and taking a break from the silliness. He has no tolerance for the antics of the villagers, especially those of his wife. As one might suspect, he is none too pleased about the sudden change in his wife's appearance and her preference for sleeping outdoors.

Though skeptical about "spirits," Bert knows that the well is far from normal, and that makes him nervous. He tends to steer clear of the well and is concerned about his wife's attachment to it.

A third-level fighter, Bert is +3 to hit with his sling due to natural skill and dexterity. When his son leads the PCs into the village, he is grumbling under his breath while cleaning a pheasant in his home.

Bert's son **Elmo Berrybottom** (see "For the Player Characters" for statistics) spends a great deal of time assisting his father, and it is their labors that have kept the village from collapsing completely. Elmo's true name is Bud, but Bert has little regard for the alliterative naming conventions of his former village. The tradition of beginning the first and last name with the same letter is so deeply instilled that halfling families have actually prearranged marriages so that the newlywed daughters could retain the appropriate monogram. Bert has no intention of continuing this tradition and has therefore given his son a nonstandard nickname.

Elmo will lead the PCs to his father's home upon the adventurers' arrival in the village.

E. Oddballs' Abode. This structure is a true house of depression, inhabited by the prophet Nostro Nobble and Kit Kaboodle, the manic-depressive minstrel.

Nostro Nobble (NG, hp 4) is considered the village eccentric, a notable achievement in this community of oddball characters. He has always been dismissed as something of a loony, but the recent troubles have lent his grim predictions an air of credibility. Nostro's prophecies once involved mundane events but have been filled with dark, gloomy portent (courtesy of the crystal drake's *dream* spells) since Biff's disappearance.

The most frequent theme of Nostro's sermons is the consequence of greed. With this in mind, Mayor Dibble will scramble wildly to prevent Nostro (who has no intention of following the mayor's edict) from speaking to the PCs.

Nostro could be annoying to the PCs because he attempts to find the hidden

significance in all of the party's actions and words. When he feels he has discerned the true meaning of any event, he expounds on his insights with a series of gloomy predictions. When the PCs arrive, he is delivering the following impassioned speech:

> ". . . mistake not the signs that have been revealed to us. We are a forsaken people, for our greed and presumption have brought a curse upon our heads, a doom for which each of us is responsible in his or her own way.
>
> "A time of darkness approaches. And in that time, there will be great sorrow, for there will be bouts of itching, many toothaches, and loss of hair. Keys will be misplaced, loaves of bread will become moldy, and many small but treasured objects will be perpetually covered with dust.
>
> "Heed my words, and be afraid!"

Kit Kaboodle (LG, hp 3) sits near his doorway, absently strumming on his lute and warbling the following cheerless tune in a dreadful monotone:

". . .Gone are ye, whom we did send.
A tear comes to my eye.
We mourn, my friend, but in the end,
We'll bake another pie."

Nostro and Kit are roommates at the other villagers' insistence, because the brooding, sulky minstrel is a creature who can find misery in any event, and his attitude tends to be contagious. All of his songs are fatalistic, claiming the tragedies have taken place because the villagers deserve it. Trying to convince the minstrel to discontinue his awful, depressing songs is an extremely challenging task, and the PCs may find themselves wanting to gag him before their stay in Welldale is through.

F. Corral. A dismal-looking little pony and a wagon frequently used by Bert Berrybottom to fetch supplies are kept here. Feeding the animal is the shared responsibility of all of the villagers, and from the looks of it, some of them have been less diligent than others in performing this task.

Pony: Int animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1+1; hp 3; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SZ L; ML 4; XP 35.

G. Garden. Pansy Berrybottom is rarely seen outside her prized garden and the legendary grove of apple trees flanking the well. Since the departure of the crystal drake, the garden is becoming a bit weed strangled, for Pansy's powers have suddenly deserted her, and in her pouting fits of self-doubt she has neglected her duties. The trees continue to thrive, however, assuring a continuous supply of apples for Bonnie Danderduff's pies.

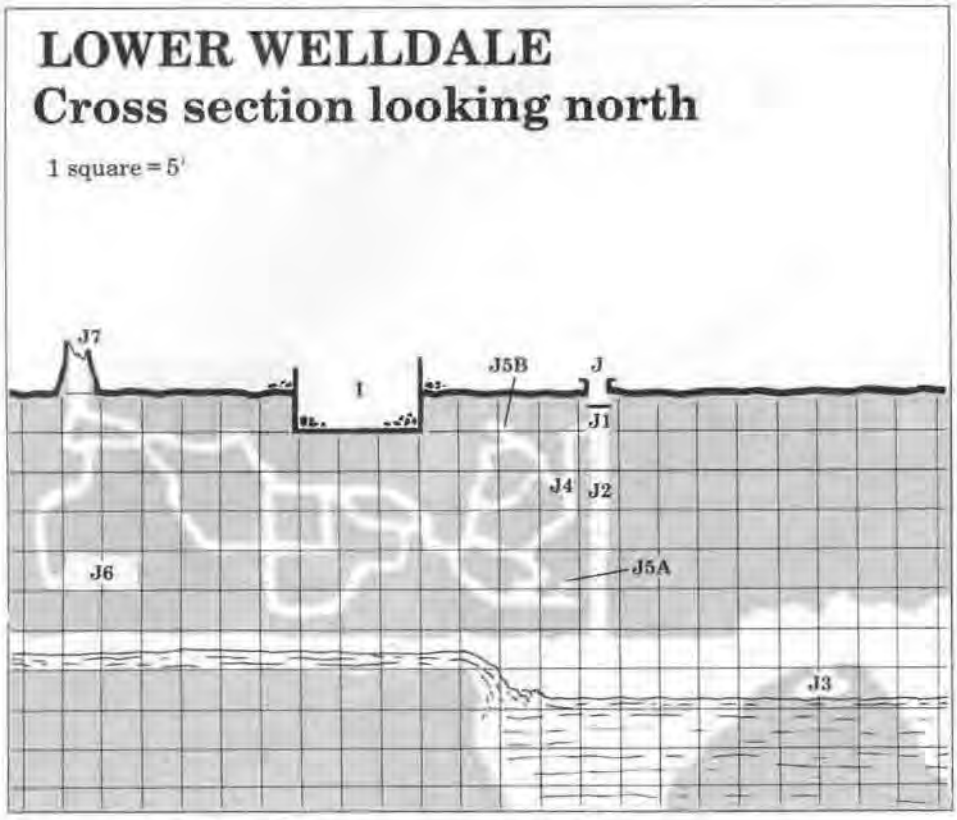
H. Sign. A small sign near the well has been altered with thick strokes of black paint to obscure the full name of the village, so that the sign reads simply: "Welldale." If examined closely, the full name—"The Prosperous Village of Welldale, a Most Pleasant and Wondrous Place to Reside"—can been read.

I. Ruins. The people who built this structure and the well nearby have long been forgotten, but it was once a well-frequented inn, the Adventurer's Repose. Many years ago, a fire consumed the building. Trees have overgrown the area, partially concealing the burned out husk of masonry and charred, rotten floorboards. The walls, though cracked and broken, stand high enough on the northern and western sides to conceal the tree stump (area J7) that is the entrance to the meenlock tunnel from the view of those standing in the village or near the well.

J. The "Cursed" Well. Read or paraphrase the following:

> The source of the halflings' despair is a rather ordinary-looking well, 1½' high and approximately 7' in diameter. The well shows signs of age and disuse, with numerous large, moss-covered stones fallen from the edge of the well into the moist ground nearby.
>
> Approximately 6' beneath the lip of the well is a flat circular patch of earth and moss, flanked by the slimy inner walls of the well. Despite evidence that suggests the patch was constructed from outside materials, it appears to be sturdy and fully conceals the shaft below.

This long-abandoned well has seen a remarkable amount of activity (and occupation) lately. The strange occurrences at the well can be traced to a pack of three meenlocks (now four, after



Biff's transformation) living within tunnels dug adjacent to the shaft. After their previous lair (several miles to the south) was destroyed by a flood, they searched for many nights for a new location, choosing a hollow tree stump just east of the halfling village. Seeking to expand their tunnels, the vile creatures burrowed through the ground and, quite by accident, reached the well shaft. Sensing an opportunity to prey on the defenseless creatures nearby, they sealed the shaft to complete their tunnels, which end in a small hollow deep below the ruins.

Meenlocks (4): INT very; AL LE; AC 7; MV 9; HD 4; hp 29, 25, 21, 17; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/1-4; SA cause *fear,* paralyzing touch, surprise, "marking" (magical *telepathic* attack), convert victim to meenlock; SD *dimension door;* SZ S; ML 18 (but flee bright light); XP 4,000; FF/63 (modified for AD&D 2nd Edition game).

The very sight of these 2'-tall shaggy black creatures causes any PC with four or fewer hit dice to fall inert with *fear* for 5-8 rounds (half if a save vs. spells is successful). The meenlocks' faces, which are white with dark fur ridges, reflect the malice and guile with which they view the world.

If the party confronts all four meenlocks simultaneously, the PCs can note that one creature is slightly different from the others. Biff, recently transformed into a meenlock, is not as hairy as his captors and still wears a torn, tattered vest. However, his transformation is irreversible, and he attacks with the same contempt that drives the other meenlocks' actions.

Should the adventurers find a means to reach the meenlocks' lair, the creatures attack immediately, using two claws which inflict 1-4 hp damage with each hit and causing *paralyzation* if a save vs. paralysis is failed. Meenlocks are terrified of all light sources and attempt to flee from bright light whenever possible; otherwise, they fight fiercely to extinguish light and flame.

The creatures each have a limited *dimension door* ability that allows them to *teleport* 6' every other round. The meenlocks' use of this ability makes the PCs' attacks against them at −4 to hit during any round they use this power. Note, however, that the meenlocks cannot use this ability when carrying a victim or while in close quarters such as their lair.

Meenlocks prefer stealth to direct combat, choosing a single victim for "marking," a process that bodes ill for its unfortunate recipient. Because the tunnels are so small, it will be extremely difficult for the PCs to penetrate the lair. If the party gives up in frustration and searches the woods for the missing halfling, the meenlocks wait until nightfall and follow the adventurers, selecting one of the PCs for marking.

Marking involves choosing a single victim—paladins are preferred, with humans next and demihumans last—for a concentrated series of attacks. Once a target has been chosen, the victim of this process automatically begins to receive a series of disturbing *telepathic* messages, which the meenlocks can deliver from as far as 300' away (they normally communicate among themselves by using magical, non-psionic *telepathy* at this range as well). These visions suggest pursuit and the horrid transformation process that turns their prey into meenlocks. Illusory indications of stealthy movement in the shadows and rustling, scratching noises plague the victim of the marking. No one but the marked individual will take note of these disturbing sounds, and the other party members may begin to question the victim's sanity.

For each hour of this attack, the victim's strength, dexterity, intelligence, and wisdom are reduced by 1 to minimum scores of 1. Because of his increasing preoccupation with these horrible visions, the victim suffers a −1 penalty to his to-hit rolls in melee. If he is a spell-caster, targets save at +2 against his spells. These effects are cumulative, but if the victim moves out of range or into a brightly illuminated area where the meenlocks cannot follow (such as one of the halfling dwellings), all effects disappear. An *anti-magic shell* or similar effects will also stop this magical *telepathic* attack, and *dispel magic* will negate it, though the attack will begin again immediately afterward.

Once the PCs have bedded down for the night, the meenlocks launch their attack silently. They gain a +4 bonus to surprise their prey (+6 at night), always surprising sleeping victims. The creatures attempt to silence or evade all guards, then drag their chosen victim away, returning to their lair via the tree

stump. After a short, gruesome process, (lasting approximately one turn), the victim becomes a meenlock.

If the PCs remain near the well after nightfall, hoping to witness the departure of its occupant, the meenlocks become aware of their presence and attempt to depart unseen through the tree-stump tunnel entrance. However, the meenlocks have not attacked since dragging Biff away, so they will inevitably emerge on the first evening the PCs are in the village. If the party is sleeping away from the well, Pansy is the first to be attacked. While it will be apparent to the PCs that Biff has been transformed, there is no sign of Teddy, the first halfling to disappear. This may indicate to shrewd players that some other creature or event is responsible for the young halfling's disappearance.

J1. Seal. A thick disk of earth, moss, and grass stretches across the well shaft 6' below the top of the well. The seal is sturdy and easily supported Biff's weight as he conducted his half-hearted examination at the villagers' insistence. A druid or ranger will be able to recognize instantly that the seal has been pieced together and placed in its present location.

The seal can be hacked away with weapons or poles, or can be removed magically. It will support a weight of up to 100 lbs. Any larger PC standing on it will dislodge the seal, sending the victim plunging down the well shaft and into the icy water below.

J2. Shaft. The seal opens to reveal a long, cylindrical well shaft that extends 56' to a hollow in the earth through which runs a wide subterranean stream. The sound of rapidly running water can be heard, but the source cannot be seen with normal light. The stone walls of the shaft are slick with algae and moisture, and are nearly impossible to climb safely.

Four feet below the seal, an asymmetrical 3' hole breaks the western side of the shaft. The PCs cannot see far into the tunnel beyond, for it dips rapidly. However, even the most insensitive PCs note that a strong sense of evil emanates from the tunnel; meenlocks somehow cause their own lairs to strongly radiate evil (detectable by spells) after living in them for longer than one day. This unease is reinforced by a smell of rotting corpses. This odor is false, left deliberately by the meenlocks to discourage intrusion by other creatures. The source of this scent is unclear, even upon inside inspection of the tunnels, for the creation of the smell is a natural ability of the meenlocks (they secrete the scent from musk glands and rub it against the tunnel walls).

The tunnels are unusual, for even though they are dug through earth, they are lined with a thick moss "carpet" placed there by the meenlocks to facilitate climbing and stealth.

J3. Underground Stream. Puck thought the well was ideal as a location for a temporary lair, for in addition to providing inspiration for his practical jokes, it allows access to a cool, clear subterranean stream. The crystal drake loved to play in the babbling waters—diving, swimming, and frolicking—nearly as much as he enjoyed playing pranks on the halflings. If Puck returns to the village, he will not depart again without enjoying the waters and looking in on his cache of "treasure."

In the center of the underground stream sits a large rock featuring a hollowed section into which the crystal drake deposited any inedible items the halflings dropped into the well as tribute. This collection includes such diverse objects as an ivory comb, eyeglasses, and several pie plates.

The crystal drake's abandoned lair also holds a small number of coins, gems and semiprecious stones that the creature believes will never be discovered, with good reason. The opening of the hollow is about 1' in diameter, and it is unlikely that the PCs will discover the treasure without an extensive, time-consuming search. If the party takes the time to investigate fully, they can uncover this unusual collection, which has a total value of 850 gp.

Lawful PCs should hesitate to cart off the halflings' tribute. The villagers will be launched into a new round of hysteria if they see these objects being pulled from the well, believing that the "spirit" will react with even more violent reprisals to this newest outrage.

There are no other signs that indicate the presence of the crystal drake.

J4. Tunnels. The meenlock tunnels once extended only from the tree stump (area J7) to the hollowed lair below (area J6). As the creatures sought to expand their tunnels, they penetrated the loose stone, emerged in the well shaft, and constructed a seal.

Because the meenlocks are such tiny creatures, the tunnel beginning at the hole in the well shaft is much too narrow for any PC but a small halfling or gnome. Dwarves are far too stocky to negotiate the uneven, loose tunnels, and even the small PCs mentioned will find going uncomfortable and extremely dangerous. Size-altering spells will work, of course, but remember that a light source is essential. This could bring additional perils, so it is recommended that you award a substantial experience-point bonus to anyone daring and clever enough to make the dangerous descent.

The twisting tunnels, which contain gnawed bones and other refuse, contain an overpowering stench that make concentration difficult. Breathing is also difficult, and torches consume precious oxygen. Base movement rate is just 3' because of the tight squeeze and loose soil.

Carefully consider the meenlocks' activity cycle and note the time of day when any PC enters the tunnels. From dawn until an hour before dusk, the creatures sleep in the hollowed lair area (area J6). From then until nightfall, the meenlocks roam the tunnels to listen for activity near the well. After dark, the creatures either remain in the tunnels or emerge from the tree-stump entrance in search of prey.

Any PC not magically altered will be required to traverse the tunnels on his belly, making combat nearly impossible (only short forward stabbing movements and fending with a dagger or other short weapon are possible). If the meenlocks encounter an invading PC and are driven back, they attempt to circle behind the intruder and cut off his escape, then proceed to close in from all directions.

It is unlikely that PCs of the levels required for this adventure have access to spells such as *cloudkill*, but should the party possess such means of flushing out the meenlocks, this could be an effective method of clearing the tunnels. The DM may rule, however, that the killing effects of a *cloudkill* spell would dissipate before reaching the lair area. Other methods, such as flooding the tunnels with light, smoke, or water, will drive the meenlocks from their lair to flee through the tree-stump entrance (J7). This is an ideal opportunity for

players to use ingenuity rather than outright force.

J5. Traps. A pair of clever natural traps have been placed in the tunnels by the meenlocks to prevent intruders—humanoid or animal—from discovering their lair. The meenlocks are fully aware of these snares and will not stumble into them unless in a panic from pursuit or a deadly spell, and even under these conditions the likelihood of them triggering any one of the traps is only 25%.

J5A. Root Trap. The root dangling from the ceiling at the entrance to this hollow section looks innocuous enough, but if it is struck by a PC crawling by, it breaks the loose soil and drops rocks from above. A PC reduced in size can avoid the root if he chooses. The falling stones cause 2-12 hp damage to a normal-sized character, and four times that for any PC of diminished size. Additionally, the dirt and flying dust dislodged by the trap are 50% likely to extinguish torches. If the trap is triggered after the PC is nearly past it (if he brushes against it with his back, for example) the cave-in will trap the PC in the dead-end tunnel. The adventurer will have 15 minutes of oxygen; digging through to the well shaft is impossible without spells because of the cramped conditions and the stone lining the shaft, which is firmly in place at this location. The PC can dig directly down through the soil into the subterranean stream area below, but panic is likely to set in before this task can be completed.

J5B. Mold Trap. One of the meenlocks uncovered a brown mold during the course of its digging, and the ranks of the meenlocks immediately dropped by one. The surviving creatures wisely redirected their tunneling and now avoid this section of the tunnels. They left the mold in place to serve as a natural trap for unwary invaders.

Brown mold: INT non; AL N; AC 9; MV 0; HD 0; hp 0; THAC0 19; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA freezing; SD absorb heat; SZ S; ML nil; MC (Mold).

J6. Meenlock Lair. West of the well, about 36' below the surface, the vertical tunnel widens to reveal a cavity in which the meenlocks sleep during the day. If PCs enter the tunnels during the day, the meenlocks are resting here. At other times, the hollow is empty except for a few small bones, scraps, and the refuse of the meenlocks. The stench in this area is nauseating.

J7. Tree Stump (alternate entrance). This huge, nearly hollow tree stump stands 10' high and marks the beginning of the meenlock tunnels. The floor inside the hollow tree is a mossy patch so cunningly disguised that it appears to be nothing more than the overgrown base of the tree. If examined closely, this patch is revealed to be a seal nearly identical to the one closing off the well.

If the meenlocks are driven out of their tunnels, they attempt to emerge here and flee. This area is hidden from the view of anyone standing at the well, so if attempts are made to flush out the tunnels, the meenlocks can escape unseen if the PCs remain on the eastern side of the ruined inn.

The tunnel section extending from this entrance to the lair below is slightly larger than the tunnels that exit into the well. If this seal is discovered, a PC of nearly any size can penetrate the lair. This also means that a victim of any size can be dragged below if captured by the meenlocks.

K. Forest Ambush. If the meenlocks are slain or driven off, the PCs may assume that the threat to Welldale has been eliminated. If they depart Welldale without confronting the forest menace, the halflings' relief will be short lived. It is also possible that the PCs may choose to search the forest before investigating the well; keep the meenlocks' motives and tactics in mind if this sequence takes place.

As if the meenlock infestation were not trouble enough, the nearby forest has recently become home to a number of spiders and a young ettercap that wandered into the area after being abandoned by its parents. The ettercap's lair, located about one mile northeast of the village, is dotted with traps that make travel through the area treacherous. Because the halflings view their well as cursed, they must come into the woods to fetch water from the stream that runs near the path. The bend of the stream closest to the village (area K2) is the precise location of the ettercap's lair, so it is likely that any villager seeking water will choose the deceptively serene pool because of its convenience, making him an easy target for the monsters living nearby.

Ettercap: INT low; AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5; hp 19; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-8; SA poison; SD traps; SZ M; ML 13; XP 975; MC.

If PCs remove the ettercap's poison glands, they can collect one ounce of poison, which can be sold for as much as 1,000 gp if they can find an alchemist or other buyer.

This 6' tall, stooped creature is distinguished by its short, spindly legs, and arms that nearly drag along the ground as it walks. Its potbellied torso is covered with tufts of wiry black hair and dark, thick skin. A picture of true menace, its features include blood-red reptilian eyes and a large mouth lined with very sharp teeth and two large, downward-pointing fangs.

Though fairly unintelligent, the ettercap is capable of devising traps with great cunning to protect its lair and snare victims. This ability is enhanced by the creature's cooperative interaction with spiders. This ettercap shares its lair tree lair with numerous giant spiders that have become its allies.

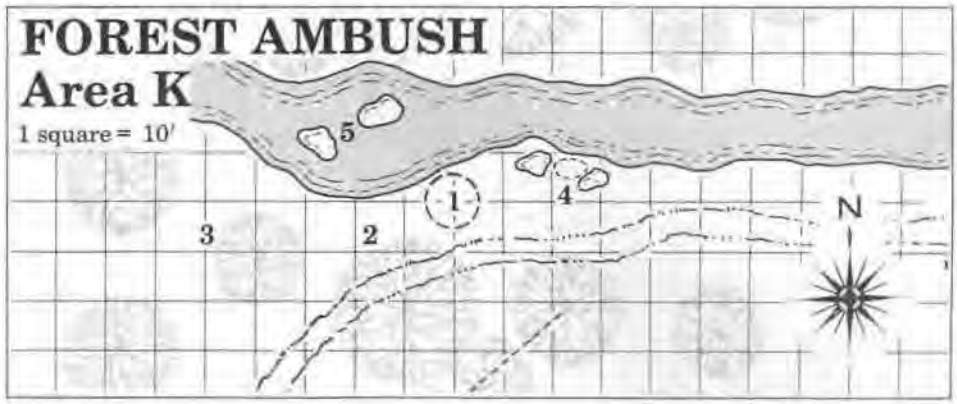
As young Teddy sadly discovered, this particular ettercap is a bit unusual, for it will venture away from its lair when particularly hungry and will use portable traps (such as a noose or garrote) to capture villagers. For each night after the adventurers arrive in Welldale, there is a 5% chance that the ettercap will attempt such an attack if no villagers come near its lair.

If the party elects to take the path leading northward from the hamlet into the surrounding woods, the ettercap and spiders spring an ambush when the party passes below its lair. The ettercap attempts to avoid direct melee, preferring to let its traps and companions do the difficult work. However, it is fierce and extremely deadly when forced to fight. Its four-fingered hands end in razor-sharp claws that inflict 1-3 hp damage in each of two raking attacks. An even more fearsome attack is the creature's bite, which causes 1-8 hp damage and injects a toxin that kills the victim by paralyzing his heart in 1-4 rounds if a saving throw vs. poison is failed.

Like the spiders with which they associate, ettercaps have abdominal glands that produce thin but strong strands of silky material, which they use to construct elaborate traps designed to slay or immobilize their prey.

This ettercap has placed the small halfling's cloak atop one such trap (see area K1). Should a PC stumble into this snare, an explosion of frenzied attacks will come from all directions (see areas K2-K5). These attacks occur almost simultaneously, and therefore it is important to determine the precise position of each party member.

Puck is not aware of the ettercap's presence in the forest, much to the monster's good fortune. The beast, while a grave challenge to the PCs, is no match for the powerful crystal drake, and Puck would certainly deal harshly with the evil creature.



K1. Pit Trap. If the PCs are searching carefully as they follow the path leading into the forest, a ranger or druid is 90% likely to notice the green woolen cloak partially concealed beneath leaves near the side of the path. Otherwise, the likelihood of discovering this clue is only 50%.

The cloak sits on a light net of the ettercap's webbing, which is fully concealed by an intertwined layer of grasses, moss, and leaves strung across a 15'-deep pit. Anyone approaching within 5' of the cloak plunges through the light cover and into the pit. Extremely close examination of the 12'-diameter area or use of the spell *detect snares and pits* will reveal the trap.

The PCs take no damage from this fall but become snared in a second layer of strands 3' from the base of the pit. Treat this trap as a *web* spell when judging the PC's ability to escape. Once this trap has been sprung, the creatures inhabiting the area will leap into action.

K2. Ettercap Lair. Any PC under or near this large tree is subject to the first of the ettercap's attacks. A sticky, thick noose woven from the creature's silk strands drops toward the PC. The beast is extremely proficient with this weapon and receives a +2 bonus on his to-hit roll (surprise gives the ettercap a further bonus of +2). Anyone "lassoed" by this trap, up to a limit of 210 lbs., will be borne aloft by the weight of the ettercap, who drops from a high limb to another limb below. The PC, dangling 25' above the ground, sustains 1-3 hp damage per round from strangulation. If the cord is severed and the PC drops to the forest floor, he takes 2-12 hp falling damage. The dangling PC may roll a dexterity check on 1d20 to cut himself free with a dagger or other bladed weapon in three rounds.

After the ettercap drops to a lower branch (receiving a +1 AC bonus with respect to ground-based foes because of concealment), he springs his second trap, a heavy net that drops on 1-4 people standing within the 10' square radius it covers upon landing. The net will be thrown so as to cover as many PCs as possible.

If several PCs remain to attack the ettercap, it drops from the eastern side of the tree and scuttles off toward its final ground-based trap, a slim trip wire strung between the two trees immediately southeast of its lair. Adventurers in rapid pursuit have only a 10% chance of noticing the snare before stumbling over it. Those who spot the snare while sprinting must roll a successful dexterity check on 1d20 to avoid making contact. Hitting the trip wire releases a heavy branch that whips around and smashes into the lead character, causing 2-12 hp damage.

Adding to the danger of the ettercap's traps is the unusual number and variety of spiders living nearby. The creatures have thrived here because the path is well traveled by animals and humanoids alike, and many have fallen victims to the ettercap and its allies.

K3. Giant Spider Lair. A giant spider drops from its web amid the tree branches to attack PCs below. Joining the assault are her 10 young (treat as large spiders).

The spider webs in this tree contain a *broad sword +1*, a potion of *neutralize poison*, a clerical scroll containing five spells of the DM's choice, and a sack with 20 small gems worth a total of 750 gp. All of these items, possessions of a fighter and his cleric companion slain while traveling through the forest, are concealed in the web sacks containing the remains of the spiders' victims. These sacks must be cut open and searched thoroughly—a truly gruesome job—for the contents to be discovered.

Giant spider (1): INT low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 3, web 12; HD 4+4; hp 26; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA poison; SZ L; ML 13; XP 650; MC (Spider, giant).

Spider young (10): INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6, web 15; HD 1+1; hp 6 (×2), 5 (×4), 3 (×3), 2; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison; SZ S; ML 7; XP 175; MC (Spider, large).

K4. Subterranean Menace. A few yards northeast of the ettercap's lair, a huge spider waits hidden in a covered pit between two large rocks. This hideous beast can leap up to 30' to attack the party, targeting isolated or nearby PCs first.

Huge spider: INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA leap, poison; SZ M; ML 8; XP 270; MC (Spider, huge).

K5. Water Hazard. Two giant water spiders lair beneath a pair of large rocks that split the flow of the stream and form a deep pool. They delay attacking until the PCs approach the stream or are driven there by combat with the other creatures, giving the spiders a +2 surprise bonus against any PCs with their backs to the stream. The spiders attempt to bite their targets and drag their victims below the surface of the water. Even a PC who saves vs. poison must struggle to avoid drowning, which will take place in 1-4 rounds unless the PC can escape.

Giant water spiders (2): INT semi; AL N; AC 5; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 21, 15;

THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA poison; SZ M; ML 12; XP 420; MC (Spider, giant water).

Concluding the Adventure

Puck will eventually return to Welldale; whether the PCs are present is up to chance (or the whim of the DM). The creature will quickly drive off the meenlocks if the party has been unable to remove the menace. Once Puck becomes aware of the consequences of his initial departure, the crystal drake reveals himself to the villagers. He will not, however, admit responsibility for the pranks he pulled while living in the well, feigning ignorance of those events.

The occasional presence and cooperation of the crystal drake will lift the spirits of the halflings, convincing the misfits that they can thrive without the magical well, and the village will eventually become quite prosperous. Their grief over the loss of their friends will eventually subside, and life for the halflings will return to normal (or what passes for normal in Welldale).

If the PCs are instrumental in slaying or driving off the monsters threatening the village, the halflings are grateful and offer the party a place to stay any time they are passing through the area. The villagers do not much have other than gratitude and a supply of apple pies to offer, but their thanks will be plentiful. The PCs' exploits will earn a lengthy description in the halflings' "Book of the Well."

The DM may wish to alter the well's tunnel structure and expand the ruins of the inn to facilitate further adventuring. Perhaps the restless undead spirit of the former innkeeper remains to prey on the curious, or the tunnels extend to a larger, more deadly colony of meenlocks many miles away.

Should the party set off into the forest, it is entirely possible that the group could run into a pesky band of faerie dragons and find that one of the halflings' pies has mysteriously turned to gold. Ω

Continued from page 4

with no particular game world in mind. The majority of all modules are set in either the GREYHAWK® or FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign settings, both of which are fine game worlds. No other magazine publishes modules written specifically for the AD&D® game, much less any of your game worlds. And it is always so much easier when these modules do not have to be refitted for use in my or someone else's game world. There are several adventures I shall positively never use because they are deeply entrenched in one game world or another.

You can tell from this what my vote is, but I understand others who do use your game worlds. I know that many are unable or unwilling to buy a single adventure for the price of eight or ten. DUNGEON® Adventures is one of the best award-winning values around. So, in this light, I would set aside 85% of the magazine for generic adventures. These can be placed in any of the various published game worlds anyway, so nothing is lost to the DMs who use them. And you would make my task, and the task of countless other silent campaign designers, much, much easier.

Please print my full address so others can ask for procedural tips or just say hello. And somebody stop Willie before he simply explodes!

Richard Hunt
6726 Spring Hollow
San Antonio, Texas 78249

I don't normally consider writing letters to the editor for any of my magazine subscriptions. I figure you folks are busy enough putting together a magazine without having the annoyance of inane chatter from your readers inundating your desk every day. Your editorial in issue #32, however, prompted me to write. You made it sound like reading these letters was the highlight of your day, and I thought to myself, "Who am I to deny someone their happiness?". I have been a subscriber since issue #1 and consider DUNGEON Magazine to be the best RPG buy on the market. You folks do a terrific job.

One of the things you talked about in your editorial was the need for reader feedback on what kinds of modules to publish. Specifically, the question of "campaign world specific" vs. "generic" modules was mentioned. As a DM, I have created my own campaign world, so any module I use has to be tailored to fit. For modules set in the GREYHAWK or FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign worlds, which use the standard AD&D rules, this is not a difficult task. For others it is more difficult. Adventures based in Krynn are slightly harder to adapt because of some of the distinctive races that inhabit that world. Oriental adventures are basically unusable for me because of the differences between it and standard AD&D rules. I suspect that any modules written for the RAVENLOFT™ or new DARK SUN™ campaign worlds will also be hard for me to integrate because of the unique nature of these game settings, and adapting a SPELLJAMMER™ adventure is practically impossible.

I guess what I'm trying to say is that the more generic a module's game setting is, the better my chances are of being able to use it in my campaign. To date, I have found the mix of modules in DUNGEON Adventures to be pretty good and the variety of milieus have kept the magazine from becoming stale. It is very apparent to me that there is considerable thought put into selecting the right modules for each issue and the results of your planning have been exemplary.

Kevin Simmons
Sherburne, New York

More RAVENLOFT™ Chills

Let me start off by saying that your magazine has been absolutely outstanding with the quality and diversity of adventures it publishes. I have about half your issues and all the adventures have been good and many truly great. But I think that one of the best yet has been William W. Connor's "Bane of the Shadowborn" (issue #31). My players are not of sufficient level to play it, but just reading it sent shivers down my spine. The different situations and the way he describes and runs them are so devious and realistic, I had to keep looking over my shoulder to make sure Ebonbane wasn't coming to strike me down! This type of "haunted house" scenario would make for perfect adventuring. Also, I'm now fascinated with the RAVENLOFT setting and would like to see more adventures taking place there.

Pat Coyne
Los Angeles, California Ω

ALICORN

BY DAVID HOWERY

The clock is running, and your enemies have the lead.

Artwork by Ruth Thompson

David got hooked on the AD&D® game at Montana State University, where he got his B.A. in Range Management. He's published numerous articles in DRAGON® Magazine and DUNGEON® Adventures. "Alicorn" was playtested by The Ravaging Horde (John, Tim, Allen, and Jamaica).

"Alicorn" is an AD&D® 2nd Edition adventure for 4-6 PCs of levels 1-2 (about 8 total levels). Most of the characters should be of good alignments. This is an appropriate first quest for a ranger or paladin. The adventure can be set in any campaign world, in a forested hilly area.

Adventure Background

Bayerlet is a noted chief among goblinkind. This huge goblin united several villages and became the ruler of a large swath of wilderness. His raiders have swept down on many elven and human towns. Several punitive expeditions sent against him have failed. Bayerlet is an exceptionally intelligent goblin with a good grasp of military strategy.

Yet, Bayerlet has finally met his match. Two weeks ago, he attempted to loot an evil ruined temple dedicated to a god of plague. His bodyguards died around him, and only the chief managed to drag himself out of the ruin, clutching a handful of golden treasure. But the goods were *cursed*, and Bayerlet was stricken with a wasting disease that has robbed him of his strength and mind.

The chief's little empire is threatened with disintegration from internal rivalries, as various champions contend for the warlord's position. Bayerlet's chief advisor, the shaman Vergrim, fears losing his high position. After several days of deep thought, the shaman developed a plan to cure Bayerlet and preserve the goblin kingdom.

Like many wilderness clerics, Vergrim knew that a unicorn's horn, called an alicorn, is useful for healing. If powdered and prepared properly, an alicorn can cure diseases. Vergrim plans to prepare a mixture of alicorn and herbs to cure Bayerlet.

Silverlance, a unicorn stallion, lives in a wooded vale north of the goblins' lair. Knowing that unicorns are immune to poison, Vergrim spent several days of prayer in creating a special

black arrow. To the shaman's surprise, Maglubiyet, the goblin deity, answered the prayer, and enchanted the arrow. Vergrim gave the *arrow of wounding* to a goblin champion, Murgen.

Vergrim, Murgen, and a score of goblins set out to hunt Silverlance. Sneaking into the unicorn's vale, the goblins destroyed trees and killed animals, actions that were sure to attract Silverlance. Sure enough, the unicorn attacked the goblins the next day at dawn.

Although the unicorn's powers enabled him to detect his enemies, he could not divine their plan. The unicorn attacked the main body of the goblins, slaying several of them. A group of archers, including Murgen, worked its way around Silverlance, coming up behind him and firing a volley of arrows. While most of the arrows missed, Murgen hit Silverlance in the back of the neck with the *cursed* arrow. As the evil arrow did its work, Silverlance began to feel weak. He killed several more goblins, then tried to remove the arrow by rubbing against a tree, but succeeded only in breaking off the shaft, leaving the iron head buried in his neck. As his strength ebbed further, Silverlance *teleported* away to his grove, where he has been slowly weakening and is now near death.

The goblins had lost too many of their hunters to search out the unicorn, so Vergrim and Murgen returned to their village for reinforcements. (The village is south of the unicorn's vale, off the map.) They were in so much of a hurry to find the unicorn that they left again immediately, not waiting for the return of a small hunting party that had left the village that morning. A lone goblin was sent to find these stragglers and lead them in the right direction.

In about four days, the goblin force will enter the unicorn's grove to kill him. A powerful and good creature may soon be gone, slain to save a wicked humanoid bandit. Of course, if the men of civilization learned of it, they would do their best to see that Bayerlet never recovers.

For the Dungeon Master

The adventure begins in the afternoon as the PCs encounter a small group of goblins (area A) who are hurrying to catch up with the main body of the goblins. The timing of this adventure is important. The goblins and unicorn fought at dawn on the day before the PCs arrive in the vale. Currently, Silverlance has 20 hp remaining. The stub of the *arrow of wounding* drains 1 hp every three hours; it has already robbed him of his strength and magical powers. From the PCs' first encounter with the goblins to the end of the adventure, the DM must keep track of time to determine who finds Silverlance first, and when he dies.

The PCs' movement should be charted on the map. The terrain is rolling hills (see pages 123-125 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

The DM must also keep track of the movement of the main body of the goblins as they search for Silverlance. The goblins begin at area B on the map and follow the route shown. The goblins, having jsut arrived from their village, begin moving away from area B at the same time the PCs meet the smaller group of goblins at area A. The goblin force (MV 6) travels at a speed of 1 mile per hour in the forest, moving during the 12 hours of daylight (assumed to be 6 A.M. to 6 P.M.); PCs (MV 12) can move at 2 miles per hour. Since the PCs will move in an unknown direction, there are several possible results for this adventure:

—The PCs may find Silverlance and rescue him.

—The goblins may find the unicorn and kill him (unlikely unless the goblins stop searching the hills).

—Silverlance may die before either side finds him.

—The PCs may encounter the goblins while both sides are searching for the unicorn.

Silverlance kept the vale free of evil creatures while he was healthy. With the weakness upon him now, he has not patrolled the area, and several evil creatures have moved down into the fringe of the vale.

Fortunately for Silverlance and the PCs, the goblins have erred in their planning. They know little of unicorn habits and surmised that Silverlance would be hidden in his lair, waiting to die. Since goblins like caves, they assume that Silverlance is hiding somewhere within the hills. Thus, the goblins first search along the edge of the vale.

Silverlance does have a lair of sorts, and he is there now, but his home is a grove of trees, not a dank cave. The goblins will waste their time searching for nonexistent caves. After a circuit around the vale, they will meander back and forth through the forest, eventually stumbling across the unicorn's grove (area E).

The PCs might be able to outguess the goblins. Common sense should tell them that unicorns live in the woods, not in caves. However, the DM should not bluntly tell the players this. The goblins start out three miles ahead of the PCs, but will waste precious time searching the hills. If the PCs search the woods first, they have a good chance to find Silverlance before the goblins get to him.

Vergrim (goblin shaman): INT low; AL LE; AC 4; MV 6; HD 2+2 (C4); hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ S; ML 10; XP 120; MC; chain mail, shield, club, 30 sp; −1 to hit in sunlight. Spells: *cause light wounds, detect magic, detect good, entangle, find traps, barkskin.* Vergrim has a wisdom of 13.

Murgen (goblin champion): AC 6; HD 1; hp 7; THAC0 19; XP 15; hand axe, studded leather armor, shield, 10 sp, short bow, 12 arrows; other statistics as given for Vergrim.

Goblins (8): AC 6; HD 1-1; hp 4; THAC0 20; XP 15; hand axe, studded leather armor, shield, short bow, 12 arrows, 5 sp; other statistics as given for Vergrim.

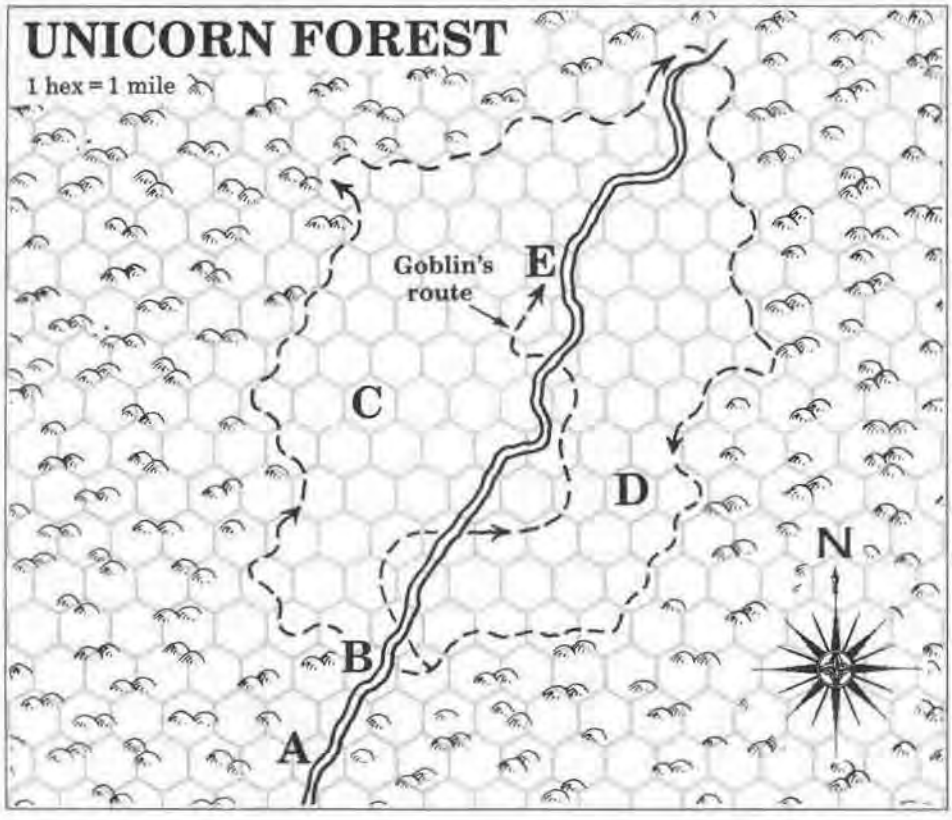
Encounter Areas

The adventure begins with the PCs traveling along the edge of a wooded hilly area about 3 P.M. Perhaps they are passing through in search of treasure in another area, or they may be returning

Arrow of Wounding

This is an arrow that has been enchanted by Maglubiyet, the goblin deity. It can be granted only through diligent prayer and ceremony. The arrow can be used only once and is +2 to hit and to damage.

A creature struck by an *arrow of wounding* loses half its strength immediately, in addition to the arrow damage. If the arrow remains in the wound, the creature will not regain its strength and magical abilities, and cannot heal its wounds even at normal rates. Usually, goblins use this arrow against monsters that have no hands to remove the arrow.



home between adventures. The DM should devise a reason for the PCs' presence that suits the campaign.

A. Unicorn Hunters. Four goblins and their pet wolf are moving through this hex. Two of these goblins, led by Garth, a champion of the village, were out hunting when Vergrim returned to gather the warriors. The fourth goblin was sent to get them, and all are now hurrying to catch up to the main body of the tribe.

Garth and the messenger, Nork, have gotten into an argument over whether Garth or his rival, Murgen, will become the new chief if Bayerlet dies. This argument is heated, since Nork is being openly rude to Garth. The two are on the verge of blows as the PCs enter the scene. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> You are traveling through quiet and peaceful hills. The forest is alive with birdsong and the croaking of tree frogs. There is no sign of civilization, no indication that anyone has passed this way recently.

> As you splash through a shallow stream, the sounds of wildlife cease. Seconds later, you peer over the streambank to see four small, ugly people enter a clearing ahead of you. Their faces are hideous and their voices are harsh. A wolf lopes along beside them. The four humanoids are dressed in mangy robes and furs, and they carry axes and shields. As you watch, the largest creature suddenly hits one of its fellows on the head with the blunt end of his axe. The smaller creature drops instantly and doesn't move.

Garth has finally become irritated enough to hit Nork, and he has managed to knock him unconscious. Regardless of what the PCs intend to do, a vagrant breeze carries their scent to the goblins' wolf, who growls and charges downhill toward you. The goblins (except for the unconscious Nork) attack one round later. The wolf and goblins will fight to the death.

Garth (goblin champion): hp 7; battle axe, shield, 10 sp; −1 to hit in sunlight; other statistics as given for Murgen.

Goblins (3, including Nork): all statistics as given for goblins in "For the Dungeon Master," but these have no bows or arrows and carry only 2 sp.

Wolf: Int semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; SZ S; ML 10; XP 65; MC.

Nork regains consciousness and sits up just as the fight ends. Seeing his companions dead (assuming the PCs win) drives his courage from him. He immediately screams out his surrender (in halting Common) and throws himself onto his knees. If the PCs make any threatening moves, Nork offers to show them a "big treasure" and babbles out the story of the hunt for Silverlance. If the PCs listen carefully, they can learn the following items of information:

—The goblin chief, Bayerlet, is dying of a disease. Bayerlet is infamous enough that the PCs will have heard of him and know him as an evil bandit.

—Bayerlet's shaman, Vergrim, needs a unicorn horn to cure Bayerlet. The goblins wounded the unicorn named Silverlance with a special magical arrow, and now the creature is slowly dying from the *cursed* wound.

—A large group of goblins just ahead to the northeast are hunting for Silverlance and plan to finish him off. The goblins don't know the location of Silverlance's lair, so they are going to search the caves in the hills along the edge of the unicorn's vale.

—Silverlance's territory is a wooded vale to the northeast. The stream here runs out of the vale.

—The "big treasure" promised by Nork is the horn of Silverlance, whom the goblin believes will die in the next day or two.

If the PCs still act as if they are going to kill him, Nork begs for his life in a monumental burst of pleading and whining. If the PCs spare him and let him go, Nork runs nonstop to his village (one day away to the south) and hides under his sleeping blankets, not emerging for another full day.

The DM must make it clear to the players that the PCs have a chance to rescue Silverlance from death, if they can find him before the goblins do, but they must hurry. If the PCs balk at the rescue, The DM should remind them that saving the unicorn will also ensure that Bayerlet will not recover, thus accomplishing two good acts at once.

B. Entrance to the Vale.

> The hills you have been traveling through give way to a broad wooded vale. Although most of the forest is untouched, there are several trees chopped down directly in front of you.

The goblins chopped down these trees before they ambushed Silverlance. This is the starting place for Vergrim's hunting group. From here, their trail follows the route shown on the map. Rangers and other trackers have their normal chance to follow the goblins, although this would be a waste of time.

The vale is home to many normal forest creatures: deer, squirrels, birds, and owls. Other than the unicorn, there are no magical creatures here.

C. The Intruder. A large gnoll named Karchoff has established a small camp here. A week ago, after challenging the chief of his village—and losing the fight—Karchoff was exiled. He wandered for days until he came over the hills and found this vale.

Karchoff likes the abundant game here and plans to stay. He doesn't know about the vale's unicorn guardian, since Silverlance has been too weak to patrol this vale. In their search for the unicorn's lair, the goblins pass to the east of Karchoff's camp without ever catching sight of the gnoll. The PCs, however, may run into him.

Karchoff will fight fiercely and never surrender. His only treasure is 8 gp and food equal to one week's rations.

Karchoff (gnoll): Int low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3; hp 17; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ L; ML 12; XP 65; chain mail, bastard sword, spear.

D. Flying Pests. A group of five urds roams this part of the vale. The urds come from a gen several miles to the north. One of their games is to torment Silverlance from the air, driving him to fury at being unable to reach them. The urds do not intend to settle in the vale, since there are no caves in the hills. They come only to hunt and pester Silverlance. Due to the tree cover and Silverlance's own might, the urds are unable to seriously harm him. While the urds would not sorrow over the unicorn's death, they would miss the entertainment of tormenting him. However, PCs who move through this hex would make a fine substitute. Each urd carries two spears (Dmg 1-4). An urd throws one spear, then uses the other to jab at opponents while swooping overhead. If two of the urds are killed, the rest flee. They have no treasure.

Urds (5): INT low; AL NE; AC 8; MV 6, fly 15 (MC:C); HD 2; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ S; ML 7; XP 35; MC.

E. Silverlance. This part of the vale is noticeably different from the rest of the forest. A group of ancient oaks towers over the other trees in the vale by 20'-30'. Anyone within two miles of this area can see the oak grove.

The center of the grove is an open grassy sward of 100 square yards. Four huge oaks stand at the corners of the sward, roughly outlining it. Silverlance has been resting beneath the northeastern oak.

What the PCs find will depend on the movements of both parties. If the goblins get to Silverlance first, the PCs arrive to find only the unicorn's body, minus the horn. If Silverlance dies before either side finds him, the PCs must find the body first in order to keep the unicorn horn out of the goblins' hands.

If the PCs find Silverlance first, before he dies, read the following aloud:

> The grass-covered sward is quiet and still. Four huge oak trees stand at the corners of the meadow. Beneath one of them, you can see a large white horselike figure lying on the ground. A closer look shows you the creatures's long ivory horn and white beard. This must be Silverlance, but he is grievously hurt. Blood has splashed down over the side of his neck from a wound near the spine, and you can see the stub of an arrow there. The unicorn's eyes are glazed, and his breathing is labored.

Silverlance's magical powers have been negated by the evil arrowhead, and most of his strength is gone. He can still stand and fight for 2-5 rounds, if needed, before collapsing.

To cure him, the PCs need only remove the arrowhead. The arrow can be destroyed by any normal means, since it is no longer magical once it is removed. The unicorn will regain his magical abilities immediately. His strength comes back in one turn, and he will thereafter heal at normal rates.

Silverlance (unicorn): INT average; AL CG; AC 2; MV 24; HD 4+4; hp 30 (20 left); THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-12; SA charge 30' for 3-36 hp damage; SD immune to death magic, poison, *charm, hold;* save vs. spells as 11th-level wizard; *teleport* once per day up to 360 yards; +2 to hit with horn; opponents have −6 to surprise roll; SZ L; ML 14; XP 650 to PCs if rescued (none if the unicorn dies); MC.

If the PCs cure Silverlance, he will be grateful but unable to reward them himself. His first task is to patrol the vale for intruders. He will eventually find the goblins and Karchoff and slay or expel them from the forest.

Concluding the Adventure

If the goblins acquire the alicorn, the PCs may want to chase them down and recover it; there is more at stake here than the unicorn. The PCs will not want Bayerlet to recover if the DM has made it clear how wicked a raider he is. Again, the outcome will be a matter of timing. The DM must keep track of the goblins' movements. They are not hiding their tracks.

If the PCs end up with the alicorn, they can sell it for up to 1,500 gp. However, the DM should not tell them this ahead of time. This is a quest in the cause of good, not greed.

Doing the right thing brings its own reward. If the PCs rescue Silverlance, the other sylvan creatures eventually hear of it. Several days after the PCs return to their home, they are visited by a delegation of wood elves. These people have heard of their good deed and have brought a reward to show their appreciation: 300 gp, a *dagger +1,* and 10 *arrows +1.* If there is an elf PC who is a fighter or priest, that PC will receive a suit of elven chain mail.

If the PCs fail completely, the shaman Vergrim uses the alicorn to cure Bayerlet, and the goblins resume their raiding. If Nork (area A) is still alive, Bayerlet listens to his description of the PCs and sends this information out to his spy network. Eventually, Bayerlet learns the PCs' names and the locations of their homes. The details of his revenge are left to the DM but can include such things as goblin ambushes, wolves raiding the PCs' hometown, or guerilla attacks every time the PCs enter the woods. Ω

MAD GYOJI

BY COLIN SULLIVAN

He wanted acceptance. He settled for revenge.

Artwork by Jim Holloway

Colin is a sophomore at Occidental College, majoring in Diplomacy and World Affairs. He is also a 3rd-class midshipman at the UCLA Navy ROTC unit. Colin says that his meager spare time is spent in playing sax, reading Phillip K. Dick, and hall sledding. He would like to thank the Round Table Pizza Gang and the Tulsans for play-testing this adventure.

"Mad Gyoji" is an AD&D® Oriental module for 4-6 characters of levels 7-10 (about 42 total levels). Any predominantly good-aligned party may play it, but a shukenja of less than 10th level is required. As this adventure draws primarily from Japanese culture, the DM may find OA1 *Swords of the Daimyo* a helpful reference, as well as the *Kara-Tur* boxed set, the *Monstrous Compendium*, (Kara-Tur appendix), and the AD&D 1st Edition *Oriental Adventures* tome.

The ideal location for this adventure is in Miyama Province on Shinkoku, the main island of Kozakura, in the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ setting. It may easily be placed into any Oriental campaign by changing the name of the lake and village, but the adventure might lose some of its effectiveness if placed in a non-Oriental setting. Both the DM and the players should realize that this adventure places high importance on honor, especially for shukenja.

Many of the Kozakuran words in italics are explained in the "Glossary" sidebar. Their use in play can enhance the atmosphere of this adventure.

For the Player Characters

The DM should read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Your adventures have taken you to the intersection of two infrequently used roads. Traveling east, you march over one more hill and see the misty lake of Ise-ko, as well as the village that shares its name. From a distance, you see that all the fishing boats are pulled from the water, and you note the presence of festival lanterns. Perhaps more interesting is a rocky green island 500' from the southern shore of the lake, connected only by a long bridge that appears to pass under a red *torii* at its terminating point on the island. As you skirt the rice paddies and approach the

mura, you pass through a vineyard of grapes growing on old fishing nets. The nets are hung out overhead, allowing you to pick off the bunches of grapes that grow down through the nets. A lonely shrine to Amaterasu sits by the roadside.

You enter the village square, decorated with iris flowers and paper lanterns, but the *mura* is strangely desolate. There are no signs of life other than muted voices coming from the largest building in the village, presumably the meeting hall. Even at midday, the mist does not completely lift from Ise-ko.

For the Dungeon Master

The village of Ise-ko lies on the western shore of the lake. It is currently in turmoil because its *myoshu*, Kiyoyasu, has contracted a mysterious illness and cannot be cured. He was never of robust health; now he is so weak he cannot walk. The villagers have tried all types of medicines and magical cures, but Kiyoyasu grows weaker daily, both physically and mentally, because of the malevolent spirit that attacks him.

Ikiryo: INT very; AL CE; AC nil; MV nil; HD nil; hp nil; THAC0 nil; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA ability drain; SD detected by only *detect evil, true sight;* can be driven away by only *exorcism;* SZ nil; ML nil; XP 7,000; MC/Kara-Tur.

Unfortunately, this ikiryo is of a special nature and can be banished by an *exorcism* spell only after the form of the spirit is identified by means of a spell of *true sight* or a *gem of seeing*, or by use of an *ema of wishes* (detailed in a later sidebar). This ikiryo is so strong that it renders its victim bedridden long before the victim actually dies, and spells such as *dispel evil* or *protection from spirits* will not hold it at bay for any duration. The reason this ikiryo is so powerful is because it was consciously created through years of preparation by Mad Gyoji, a being (detailed later) who lives on Miyashima, the island in the lake. See "Miyashima" for further details on this ikiryo.

Kiyoyasu took sick about a week ago and will die at midnight tomorrow night when his constitution score reaches zero. Unfortunately, Mad Gyoji sent his cursed creation shortly before the start of the Iris Festival on the fifth day of the fifth month. By the time the ikiryo attacked Kiyoyasu, this holiday had begun. The Iris Festival is a two-week celebration in which all the fishing boats are pulled in, and iris petals are thrown into the water to keep the nature spirit of the lake happy. During these two weeks, the lake belongs to the nature spirit alone, and so Mad Gyoji cannot be reached by rowing across the lake to Miyashima.

Ise-ko village appears empty during this normally festive holiday because the whole village of some 200 people is crowded in the meeting hall that also serves as Kiyoyasu's home.

Kiyoyasu: AL LG; AC 10; MV 6; Bushi 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 9 (16), D 6 (13), C 2 (9), I 8 (15), W 6 (13), Ch 10 (17); katana, 2 ch'ien, 30 fen. All attributes in parentheses are the normal values for Kiyoyasu before he was attacked by the ikiryo.

Kiyoyasu wears a necklace that marks him as the *myoshu* of Ise-ko. Within his home he also keeps the village scrolls that trace the lineage of all its inhabitants.

Mad Gyoji's Curse

As soon as the PCs enters Ise-ko village, a worried-looking fisherman approaches them and begs them to see Kiyoyasu. If the PCs ask why they should see the village leader, the fisherman speaks to the shukenja of the party, explaining only that Kiyoyasu is gravely ill with fever. If the PCs agree to follow, read the following passage to the players:

You enter the meeting hall, which is the home of the *myoshu*, Kiyoyasu. The pungent scent of herbs is present, as well as the sound of quiet conversation and muffled coughs. The fisherman leads you across the meeting room full of quiet villagers and through a sliding door into a small bedroom. In the center of the room, Kiyoyasu lies on a *futon*, attended by his wife and two elderly villagers. His eyes are closed until his wife whispers into his ear; then he opens his eyes and sits up. His cordial bow and smile do not mask his pain, and he lies back down as he speaks to you.

"Welcome. I am Kiyoyasu, myoshu of Ise-ko. Consider ourselves at your disposal. I am sorry to have bothered you, but I have a situation that only you can help me with." He nods his head, and his wife and the two villagers bow and leave the room.

"It's the curse," he whispers, "and not even you can cure me." He points at the shukenja. You wonder if it is Kiyoyasu or fever-induced delirium that is speaking to you now.

"Our family founded this village," the sick man continues, "and our household has always led the people who live here. Forty years ago . . ." He closes his eyes. When he opens them again, they stare blankly at the white-washed wall of the bedroom.

"Forty years ago, my grandfather Kazuo banished Mad Gyoji from Ise-

Glossary

Ema. A wooden plaque about 6" × ¼" × 4", that is painted with the animal of that calendar year, and inscribed with requests for success, good health, or victory. They are then hung near shrines dedicated to the god or spirit the person is requesting aid from.

Futon. A sleeping mat that can be rolled up and put away in a closet during the day.

Hagi. Bush clover, often associated with the family of the shogunate.

Haiku. A short poem that describes a natural setting and mood in three lines of five, seven, and five syllables each.

-ko. Suffix denoting a lake or pond.

Koku. The amount of rice required to feed one person for a year, often used as a rate of exchange, approximately 5 ch'ien.

-michi. Suffix denoting a small road or trail.

Minka. A peasant house.

Mura. A small village community, usually of about 100 people.

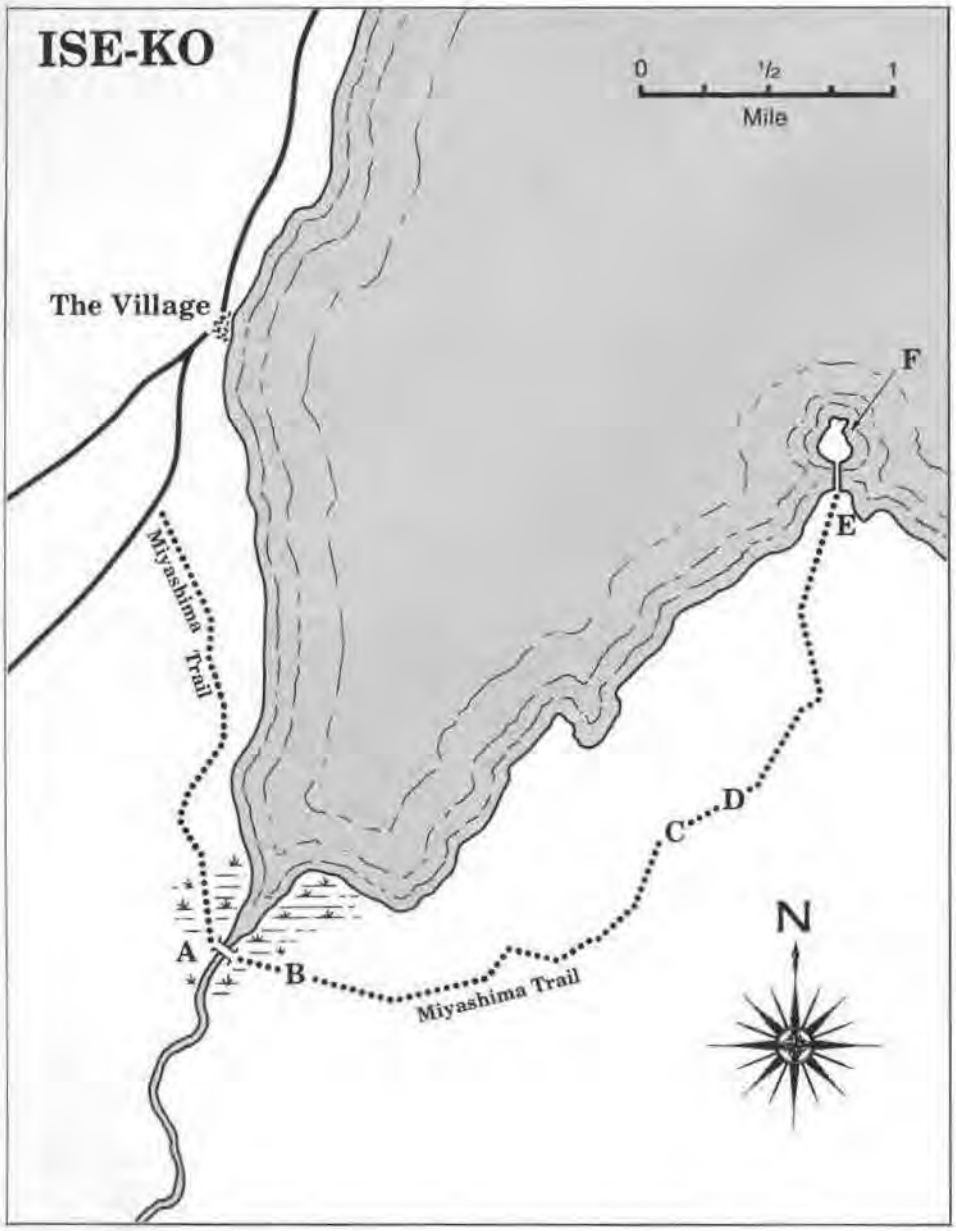
Mura hachi bu. Separation from the village, used as a penalty for serious crimes; is considered a punishment akin to death.

Myoshu. Village spokesperson, the leader when dealing with regional government.

Shoen. An estate, a grant of land.

Tori. A stone lantern with sloped tops of 4, 6 or 8 regular sides, varying in height from 2'-6'.

Torii. The pillared red gate-arch at the entrance to a shrine.



ko for killing a merchant named Fukuda. Gyoji had been a loyal villager in the past, while the merchant was of dubious character at best, but Gyoji refused to explain why he had killed Fukuda. We all heard the terrible scream that night.

"When we found Fukuda, it looked as though he had been mauled by an animal. Gyoji stood over the merchant, staring at his blood-soaked hands with a crazed expression and repeating he had been shamed, over and over. We were afraid he would again use the terrible sorcery that had killed Fukuda, so we immediately decided his fate. We gave him a choice: banishment or death. He chose *mura hachi bu,* banishment from the village.

"Mad Gyoji gathered some of his equipment from his shack, took his family marker from the village shrine, left that same night. He said nothing, not a word in his own defense. Among our people, death is usually preferable to banishment, but Gyoji chose to go to Miyashima, that accursed island," he mutters, pointing to the lake.

"We heard nothing from him afterward, as it should be, until my grandfather died three weeks ago. We thought he was just a victim of old age; he had lived a long life. But then my father, Shuichi, who had been *myoshu* for two years, became ill. He died at midnight a week ago, and the next day I woke up with this fever," his voice rasps.

"It is Mad Gyoji's curse. No one else would have reason to hate my family and our village enough to curse us. I am asking you to go to Miyashima and kill Mad Gyoji. Avenge my family and stop this curse, I beg you. I have two sons . . ." Kiyoyasu sighs and his eyes close, but the pain does not leave his face.

One of the elderly villagers reenters the room. "Now you know our plight," he says. "This is only a humble fishing village, but as assistant record-keeper, it has been agreed upon that I offer you our whole treasury, five *koku* of silver ingots, as well as the use of any equipment you might need."

The record-keeper looks over at Kiyoyasu. "He will live through today, and maybe tomorrow. Then he will die at midnight, like his father. Because of the Iris Festival, you cannot take any boat to the island or you will surely anger the nature spirit of the lake. You must go to Miyashima on foot. We sent three young men to Miyashima five days ago, but the forest south of the lake is full of tree goblins. We fear they will never return. You must hurry, since it will take at least the rest of the day to walk to the bridge. That is, if you will help us?"

Kiyoyasu is basically correct in his assessment that Mad Gyoji is responsible for the curse, and that it was sent to destroy all the *myoshu* of the village, the males of his family. But he does not know that this "curse" is in fact an ikiryo, or even what an ikiryo is. He also does not know the secret behind the merchant Fukuda's murder.

Unknown to the people of the *mura,* Mad Gyoji is a fox hengeyokai, though he was not originally evil like most of

his kind. He had been dubbed "Mad" Gyoji by the villagers due to the reddish tint of his hair, his mysterious midnight walks, and the strange odors that occasionally exuded from his potter's shed. The villagers knew little about him, and they called him Gyoji only because that was the name on his family marker in the local shrine. Nevertheless, he was a peaceful creature who attempted to live in harmony with the humans and soon became respected for the quality pottery he produced.

Though he enjoyed living the life of a human, occasionally Mad Gyoji would miss his fox form. He would sneak out on nights when the moon was waxing full and run through the woods on his four feet. Unfortunately, the traveling merchant Fukuda caught him changing from his animal form to his human form late one night. Fukuda was actually a yakuza and a ninja assigned to this area. Instead of telling the superstitious villagers, he tried to blackmail Gyoji.

Previously, Fukuda had bought much of Mad Gyoji's pottery, and sold it to other *mura*. Now the merchant promised to keep silent about Mad Gyoji's secret, but only if he bought the pottery at a fraction of the previous asking price. At this, Mad Gyoji flew into a fury and, shifting into his fox form, attacked Fukuda.

The merchant's death cry brought out all the villagers. They found Gyoji, now returned to human form, standing over the merchant's body. Mad Gyoji had truly gone crazy and could not think rationally. He had only enough wit about him to insist he had killed Fukuda rightfully, but when asked to explain how he had been dishonored by the merchant, he could not think of a good story in his excited state. However, he did have sense enough not to reveal his secret, for he knew that he would have been killed by these peaceful but superstitious villagers.

So that same night, Kazuo banished Mad Gyoji to Miyashima, despite the potter's protests that Fukuda had wronged him. His family marker (a small stone tablet about 9" high with the name "Gyoji" engraved on it) was removed from the village shrine dedicated to Amaterasu, symbolizing that Gyoji had been chastised by the Eight Million Gods as well.

Rising from his deranged state for a solemn moment, Mad Gyoji promised to revenge himself on Kazuo and the wicked *mura*. He then turned his back on the village that had been his home, walked off to the island of his exile, and devoted himself to sorcery and revenge. Mad Gyoji has lost more of his sanity over the past 40 years, but he has learned how to master both of these arts.

Ise-ko Village

If the party, especially any shukenja, accepts the task as an honorable act, the PCs are hurried out of the meeting hall as soon as any questions have been answered.

The *mura* is a large but unremarkable one, consisting of the town hall, 46 *minka*, five chicken pens, 150 grapevine nets, and one shrine dedicated to Amaterasu. The villagers will lend the PCs any basic equipment that can be found in a fishing village. There are no weapons or armor in the *mura* other than several fishing spears, knives, and nets. There is, however, a net maker who does some minor blacksmith work, crafting small pieces such as fish hooks. There is little livestock, but any of 60 chickens and three donkeys are at the PCs' disposal.

If any of the fishermen are asked to accompany the PCs, they politely refuse, being terrified of Miyashima. The PCs will not be given the use of any of the 10 fishing boats, unless the PCs insist on ignoring the ample warnings they receive about the nature spirit of the lake (see "The Lake"). The villagers will make it clear that the nature spirit is not to be disturbed during the Iris Festival.

Rumors

Though they will be politely hurried along by the anxious fishermen, the PCs may spend some time trying to gain information from the villagers. In addition to any general information the villagers know about Mad Gyoji or Miyashima (which is very little), the PCs may hear some of the rumors floating around the village. For every two turns the PCs spend interviewing people, roll 1d12 and refer to the following table. If different people are being interviewed simultaneously (a more time-efficient method), separate rolls should be made for each PC doing the interviewing. A PC who gets the same information twice may add 2 to the result of the roll and refer to that rumor instead. Anyone specifically attempting to speak with the elders of the *mura* may also add 2 to the die roll, since the elders are likely to have firsthand experience of the events that took place 40 years ago. Due to their natural investigation skills, any yakuza in the party also receive this bonus. All of these bonuses are cumulative. The rumors are true except where noted in parentheses, but some are more embellished than others.

1-3. "Mad Gyoji? Yes, he was definitely crazy. I hear his hair turned red when one of the experiments he made in his shed blew up on him. That's what happens when you play with the forces of the universe." (Gyoji's shed never blew up, and his hair was always red.)

4. "Mad Gyoji used to sneak into my father's chicken coop at night sometimes. But my father would tell nobody, since that crazy man seemed so gentle and helpful the rest of the time."

5. "Miyashima used to have a huge temple to Amaterasu, goddess of the dawn. But after an evil force destroyed the temple, nothing but angry spirits live there. I doubt Mad Gyoji is still alive." (He *is* alive.)

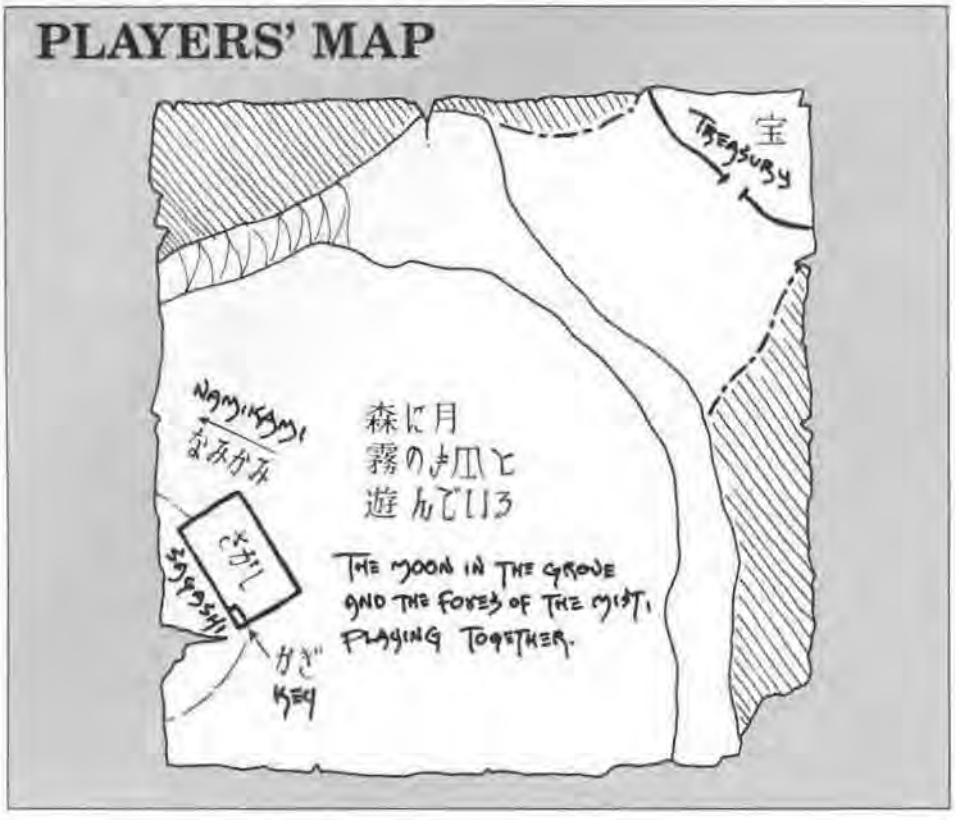
6-7. "On Miyashima, there is a haunted grove where the two-headed guardian spirits of Miyashima still live." (There are guardian spirits there, but not two-headed ones.)

8. "If you want to know about Mad Gyoji, check his old shed. You'll find all the tools of his sorcery. Nobody has been foolish enough to disturb that evil shack." (The shed is there, but it has been worn down by time and weather.)

9. "All the gods have forgotten Miyashima; even Amaterasu has forgotten her great temple. Now, it's only a place for demons and evil spirits. Gyoji is probably a demon himself, if you ask me." (Gyoji is a hengeyokai, there are no demons on Miyashima, and the gods never forgot Miyashima.)

10-11. "Gyoji's potter's shed is on the edge of the *mura*. Nobody has gone in there since he left, not even thieves. If you look through the window, you can still see some of his pottery. It's a shame he went completely crazy and killed that awful man Fukuda. Gyoji was a loyal villager, even if he was a little strange even before that night."

12-13. "The reason Gyoji went to Miyashima when he was exiled is because he knew there was a magical treasure there. When the island fell under evil powers, the treasure was hidden by the island guardians. He's probably using that treasure to expand



his sorcerous powers."

14+. "It's not just a curse Mad Gyoji put on Kiyoyasu's family. He has sent an invisible spirit of his hatred to attack them. There are legend about these evil spirits."

If the DM wishes, he can choose which rumors to give the PCs, or he can even choose to give the whole list to them. If the party spends an hour interviewing the villagers, the fishermen start to politely inquire if the PCs are really going to help them, urging that time is short. If asked, any villager can show the party the way to the potter's shed where Mad Gyoji once worked.

The Potter's Shed

The party can quickly find this shed with simple directions or the help of a villager. It is a small wooden shed, barely 10′ square, with a warped wooden roof. The kiln that once stood beside it has tumbled in, and all its bricks have been scavenged. The door of the shed nearly falls off when opened, its hinges are so old. Once the PCs enter the shed, read the following passage aloud:

> The shelves that line the walls of this tiny shed are laden with all sorts of pottery in various stages of completion. A rotted bedroll half blocks the door. Blocks of dried-out clay are arranged on the floor next to a potter's wheel. A half-finished pot lies on the wheel, and a dust-covered table stands next to it. On the table are six broken, unbaked rice bowls, a book, and a single piece of parchment. Another small table holds chipped and broken pieces of glass and various scraps of alchemy equipment left behind in the wake of Gyoji's exile four decades ago.

The broken and chipped glasswork and the leftover components are evidence of Mad Gyoji's experiments in sorcery and of his hasty departure. The book is filled with short folk tales; any close inspection of the book shows that two of the pages have been bent over to mark the text.

The first section marked details the story of a fox-god sworn to protect Miyashima who defeated a group of evil spirits and turned them into guardians of the island. The second page has been torn out but then placed back within the book. It tells of the mistress of an imperial general who was jealous of his wife. Without the mistress's knowledge, her hatred created an evil spirit, an ikiryo, that killed her lover's pregnant wife over the course of a week. The other stories in this book are of a similar vein—part-history, part-fable—but these seem to have been scarcely read.

The parchment on the dusty table is a hastily penned note in frenzied script that reads: "Kazuo, I am not going into exile. I am leaving to regain my honor and prove my innocence. If I cannot do that, I will return for revenge." The villagers all know about this note and the contents of this shed but have not tampered with anything. For 40 years, only rain and wind have bothered the remnants of Mad Gyoji's workplace.

The Lake

If the PCs are foolish enough to try to take a boat to Miyashima despite all the warnings, let them try. The fishing boats are large rowboats that none of the villagers will dare take into the water, and the party will be hard pressed to convince anyone to lend a boat. Once the party is 100′ offshore (approximately three rounds for a large rowboat), read the following passage aloud:

> The pure waters of the lake are strangely calm. The mist lies heavy on the sparsely scattered iris petals. Suddenly, there is a massive swell in the lake followed by a cataract of water that pours down on you. After gathering your wits, you see a 15′ figure standing on the water. Its features are smooth and fluid yet powerful. A garland of iris petals circles its head. There is a look of absolute indignation on its face.
>
> "What business do you implacable mortals have on my lake? You know better than to bother me! Leave!"

This figure, of course, is the nature spirit of Ise-ko. The PCs may hastily apologize and row quickly back to shore. If they try to explain to the nature spirit their reason for disturbing it, they get no sympathy, as it is in one of its malevolent moods. For every round the party continues to negotiate with the spirit, there is a cumulative 10% chance it becomes irritated and attacks. As soon as the party heads for the shore, it gives

up its attack. The DM may want to remind the players that, in the highly unlikely event that the nature spirit is destroyed, the party will have to face the wrath of an angry village whose deity they have just killed.

Nature spirit (greater): AL variable; AC 2; MV 12; HD 15; hp 94; THAC0 5; #AT 2; Dmg 1-10/1-10; SA cast all water-related spells; SD *invisibility, polymorph self, detect evil/good, detect magic, detect harmony* (all once per round); *shapechange* (5×/day); *know history, aura* (at will); *reward, ancient curse* (once per week); +4 or better weapon to hit; immune to water-based magic; MR 70%; SZ variable; ML 14; XP none if slain; MC/Kara-Tur.

As the PCs leave the village, regardless of whether they try to collect information beforehand, they are approached by an old woman leaning heavily on her walking stick and apparently half-blind. She walks up to one of the PCs at random and, grinning toothlessly, says, "You are a good child. You bring great honor to your mother." Her smile fades as she continues. "But take care on Miyashima, child. The legends say little, but they do say it is a bewitched place. Remember to beware the enoki trees, and do not neglect Namikami. May Amaterasu smile on you." She pats the PC on the cheek before hobbling off. The party cannot find her, even if they search for her or question the villagers. Details on Namikami are given in the section "Miyashima."

The Miyashima Trail

This trail begins as a branch of the southern road leading out of Ise-ko village. The turnoff would be unnoticeable if not for a small stone marker that reads, "Miyashima-michi." Over two centuries have passed since Miyashima held a major temple and place of enlightenment, and the trail has been badly neglected. This is the result of a chain of events that began 250 years ago, when Lord Nobunaga ransacked Miyashima.

Nobunaga was an ambitious *shugo-daimyo* (military governor) of Miyama province who became worried over the growing power of the shukenja of Miyashima. He already bore little goodwill for the Kanchai sect of the Way of Enlightenment who built the temple, as he was a follower of the strange *gaijin* (foreign) god named Bane. When Nobunaga's spies discovered that the Temple of Amaterasu had hidden many of its heavy coffers from the tax collectors, he had his excuse to level Miyashima, despoil its treasures, and drive away its priests. He was quite successful in quarantining Miyashima, but this attack must have greatly worried the Kanchai sect and the other temples of Miyama Province, for Nobunaga was assassinated soon afterward.

Once the PCs have traveled to the southern end of the lake, they enter a thick sub-tropical forest, the outskirts of which have been thinned out by the axes of the villagers. Beyond the swampy stream that feeds Ise-ko is a village of tasloi who have recently settled in the heart of the woods. They have adapted well, despite living in a slightly colder climate than they are used to. The village of Ise-ko knows of these "tree goblins" but has not been disturbed by their presence yet, partially because the tasloi have only recently arrived, but also on account of the villagers' superstitious nature—they will not pass the dead sohei at area B or the stream beyond.

All tasloi encountered in this adventure have the following statistics unless otherwise noted:

Tasloi: INT low to average; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9, climb 15; HD 1; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3/1-3 or by weapon type; SA surprise; SZ S; ML 10; XP 35; MC.

A. The Footbridge.

> The woodland path has been getting increasingly marshy for the past 300', but now you have entered a bog. The path was overgrown and rough up to this point; now it is almost nonexistent. Where a slowly running stream flows for a width of 120' over the swamp, there are the remnants of a footbridge that seems to have been designed centuries ago to span a much narrower flow.

The depth of the stream ranges from 1'-2', but it is interlaced by ribbons of thick mud that make traversing it arduous, if not impossible, for smaller characters. Any horses or mules must be left on the western bank, as the mud is too soft for them to cross, and there are no fords nearby. As soon as anyone enters the stream, voluntarily or otherwise (see below), he gets the undivided attention of five water moccasins that have made their home along the west bank.

Poisonous snakes (5): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 15, 12 (×2), 11, 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (save or take 3-12 hp damage); SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; MC.

The footbridge is mostly intact, though the stream runs over it at several places, and planks are missing throughout. The PCs may cross the bridge if they move slowly (MV 6) and make dexterity checks on 1d20 at a +3 bonus. A PC who fails this check slips off the footbridge and falls into the stream, attracting the water moccasins.

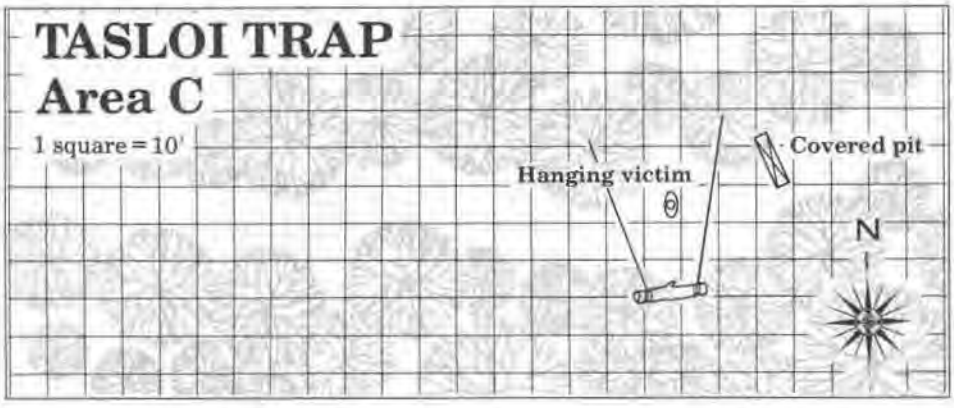
Even if the party does make it across the footbridge, there is still 30' of stream and marsh to cover before reaching relatively solid ground. Fortunately, the stream is only 1' deep here, and there is no chance of attracting the snakes.

B. Ancient Warning.

> About a quarter mile beyond the footbridge, the ground becomes solid again. The forest is thicker now and crowds the trail. Cypress, bamboo, and cedar create a blanket of vegetation that blocks much of what little light comes through the fog. You make your way around an oak tree that has grown in the center of the trail and are greeted by a grisly sight.
>
> Overhead, a wisteria-covered log rests across the branches of two dead cedars that stand on either side of the trail. Collapsed in heaps on the ground below the log, their arm bones still tied to the log, are the jumbled skeletal remains of three humans. Nailed to one of the trees is a moss-covered sign that reads: "Miyashima quarantined on penalty of death, by order of Nobunaga, 1170." Floating beside the skeletons is a ghostly figure dressed in do-maru armor. It drifts to the ground and wails, "I must go to the bridge. I am not finished here. Help me."

Haunt: INT non; AL LG; AC 0; MV 6; HD 5; hp 32; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA possession; SD hit by only silver, magical weapons, or fire (1 hp damage per hit plus magic bonuses); SZ variable; ML 16; XP 2,000 (for helping it); MC.

Once, this haunt was a man named Masao, a sohei for the Temple of Amaterasu on Miyashima. He was ordered



to take a secret map to a courier at the footbridge but was caught by Nobunaga's troops and left tied to the log with two other captives as a warning. The secret of his mission died with him, but he became a haunt after death in order to complete his task. Not long ago, he attempted to enlist the aid of a raiding party of tasloi who were heading west on the trail, but he succeeded only in terrifying them. He will not answer any questions about his mission but can give general information about Miyashima and Nobunaga's attack (see the beginning of this section and the Miyashima section). His knowledge is limited to the Miyashima of two centuries ago.

As for the present location of the secret map, he will say only that it is "underfoot somewhere." If the party agrees to help, Masao approaches one PC and possesses him (since the PC is not resisting, the possession is instantaneous, without the gradual dexterity drain normally necessary). The haunt-host may be questioned, but he will not explain his unfinished business. The possessed character will then pull a scrap of parchment out of a compartment in the sole of one of the skeleton's sandals and walk back to the eastern shore of the stream (area A). Once over the bridge, the haunt permanently dissipates, leaving the possessed PC momentarily dazed and holding the moldy scrap of parchment (this is the Players' Map). The formerly possessed PC now has a dexterity of 3, which can be returned to its original score at the rate of one point per turn of rest.

If the party does not agree to help the haunt, it attacks the nearest PC by draining two dexterity points per hit until the victim reaches zero and is possessed. Throughout the attack, the haunt keeps repeating, "I must go to the bridge. I am too close to fail. I am not finished yet."

If the skeletons are searched, there is a 1-in-6 chance that the map will be found if the PCs do not know about it; it will be found automatically if the sandals are specifically searched. There is nothing else of value on them except for a small bag containing six pearls, worth one ch'ien each. The do-maru each skeleton wears is rusted and rotten, therefore totally useless.

The party will probably not recognize it, but the map is of the northeast corner of Miyashima. The map is fairly accurate except that it depicts the huge rock offshore as an extension of Miyashima itself. To the southeast of a large shrine labeled with the name of the deity Namikami is a small shrine with the name "Sagashi" written on it. The offshore rock is labeled "Treasury." Scribbled on the bottom half of the map is a *haiku*, written in old Kozakuran: *Mori ni tsuki/ Kiri no kitsune to/Asonde iru.*

This reads in Common: The moon in the grove/And the foxes of the mist,/ Playing together.

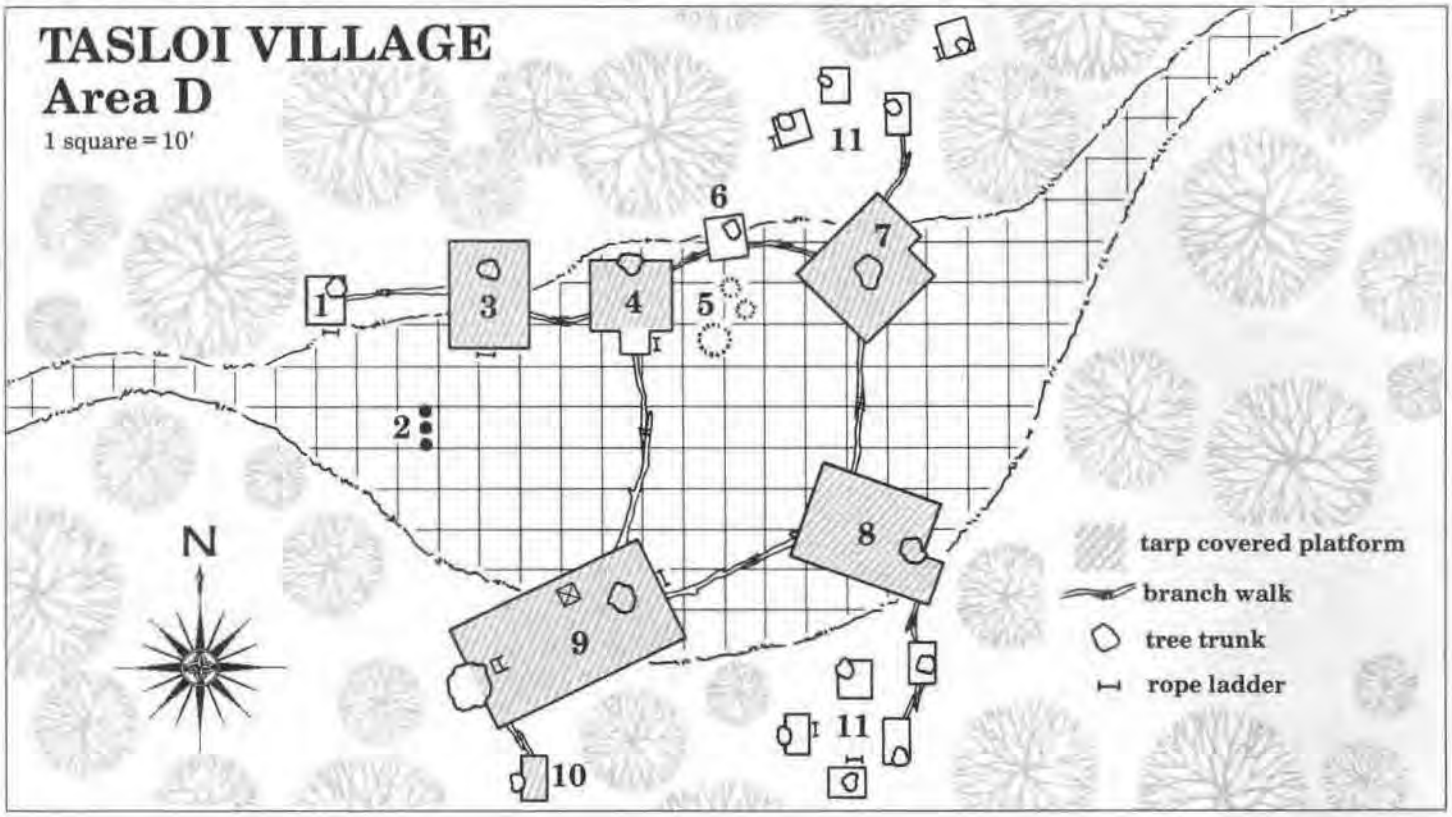
C. Tasloi Trap.

> You are traveling northeast along the trail as the afternoon draws toward its end. The fog is still thick, and the shadows cast by the overlapping tree branches have grown darker. The forest is absolutely quiet.
>
> Then you see a sight that could only have been inspired by the ancient warning of Nobunaga a couple of miles back. Hanging by a cheap hemp rope from the tallest branch of a young cypress tree is a young human dressed in shabby padded armor and fisherman's trousers. This is undoubtedly one of the three young men sent out by the village of Ise-ko five days ago. He is quite dead and appears to have been hanging upside down, just above the ground, for several days. Hanging from the villager's leg is a plank with a message scrawled on it in poor trade language: "Humans. No deals. Cross our line, pay our price." Below the villager's head is a patch of cleared dirt filled with broken bones, twigs, and various baubles.

The sign may be mostly bravado, but until they can find a way to raid the humans of Ise-ko, the tasloi do not want to be exterminated themselves. When three villagers appeared with their spears and armor, the tasloi worried that more would follow, and so they looked for the most convincing warning they could think of.

The tasloi quickly agreed that the dead sohei and the terrible apparition (in area B) were a convincing warning, and so they set out to construct something similar of their own. (With their limited intelligence, they did not realize that the three young villagers had already gotten past the haunt in area B. The fishermen had heard legends of the haunt and walked well south of the marsh and around its abode before returning to the Miyashima Trail.) Unfortunately, the tasloi shaman's attempts to conjure up a terrible apparition failed, and so mundane methods had to be employed.

If the PCs look for traps, there is a 2-in-6 chance of noticing ropes hidden in the foliage (none of the PCs will see the tasloi hiding in the branches, though). If the young fisherman is cut down, the branch of the cypress tree springs back and dislodges a log tied to two huge cedar trees on the opposite side of the trail, hitting anyone within 15' who is surprised (make individual surprise rolls at −4). Anyone hit takes 2d6 hp damage and is stunned for the next round. Those who dodge the flying log lose initiative for the next round, when the tasloi burst out of hiding and attack. The tasloi, who have been watching the party from a safe distance for the past mile, are well prepared and waiting in ambush. Six tasloi overhead in the trees drop nets, entangling any PCs hit by the log. They then drop out of the branches and stab the entangled



PCs with their javelins.

Tasloi (6): hp 6, 5 (×3), 4 (×2); net, javelin; other statistics as given in "The Miyashima Trail."

Also running onto the trail and attacking the party are another 17 tasloi. Though tasloi hate daylight and suffer a −1 attack roll penalty, they fight out of fear that the party has been sent to drive out their band.

Tasloi (17): AC 5; hp 7 (×3), 6 (×2), 5 (×7), 4 (×2), 3 (×3); shield, javelin (×10), short sword (×7); other statistics as given in "The Miyashima Trail."

As soon as it looks like the tasloi are losing the fight, the surviving tasloi run northeast up the trail and over a 10'-deep covered pit that collapses under any weight of 100 lbs. or more. If the PC is looking for traps, this poorly covered pit will be spotted automatically. Any PCs falling into the pit take 1d6 hp falling damage.

If the PCs avoid the pit, which is only 6' wide, the tasloi will attack again, this time not retreating. Even if all the tasloi seem to have been killed, the PCs will see one scrambling across the treetops along the road to warn the rest of the village (area D). The treetops provide too much cover for the tasloi to be hit by missile attacks. If the party attempts to chase down the tasloi, they will find themselves in the village before they catch up with it.

D. Tasloi Village.

You continue to follow the road and the escaping tasloi. You have not gone more than a quarter of a mile when the road opens to a clearing 200' long and 50' across. Surrounding this clearing are six or seven huge fir trees that stand out among the cypress, bamboo, and cedar.

But more interesting than the trees are the platforms built in them, 40' above the ground. Just beyond the clearing are smaller, unfinished platforms. The clearing itself is empty except for some cooking fires and what appear to be war trophies atop bamboo stakes.

However, above the dangling rope ladders, the long-legged "tree goblins" are stirring in the trees, crossing from platform to platform by interlocked branches that appear to be woven together. To your left, the tasloi you have been chasing is climbing the rope ladder to the nearest platform, which is set a little higher and is smaller than the ones beyond it.

This village is about a year old. Though the main platforms have been constructed, the separate family platforms have not yet been built.

In a huge tasloi band far to the south, a young, clever tasloi named S'kri-Ta was convinced by the village shaman, Nuida, to overthrow the chieftain, S'kri-Ta's father. When he failed, his father chose to dishonor him as much as possible by banishing him and the 80 adults who supported him, including the old shaman, Nuida.

They traveled north until it nearly became too cold for them, and settled south of Ise-ko. S'kri-Ta is unhappy at his banishment, but being chieftain of his own band suits him well.

If the party defeated all the tasloi at the trap (area C), the village is missing two-thirds of its warriors. However, the females of this village fight as well as their mates, and the chieftain is here to lead his remaining people.

Halfway up the rope ladder is the escaped tasloi. If he is not stopped, at the end of the round he reaches the platform at the top of the ladder (area D1) and sounds the lookout gong, alerting the whole village.

Tasloi: AC 5; hp 5; shield, short sword; other statistics as given in "The Miyashima Trail."

The village is also starting to stir as sunset approaches, and so there is a cumulative 20% chance each round the party remains in the clearing below that they will be discovered by the tasloi (disregard descriptions of surprised or sleeping tasloi if this happens). This check applies in areas D2 and D5, too.

One round after the party is spotted and a shrieking cry of alarm is raised, the tasloi warriors from areas D3 and D9 throw javelins down at the PCs, with the platform giving them 60% cover (−5 cover, −2 concealment).

The woven branches are firmly tied together by spider silk from the chieftain's pets, a pair of young giant spiders. The branches have been scraped smooth on top and are about a foot wide each, flanked on either side by vines and hemp rope that serve as handholds. These walkways between the platforms are built to support the weight of tasloi, not humans. If more than two people at a time attempt to cross between platforms, there is a 1-in-6 chance per additional person that the branch will snap, leaving the PCs scrambling for a handhold. If the PCs make successful dexterity checks on 1d20, they can grab one of the vine-rope handholds and make their way to the next platform. Any PC failing this check falls 40' to the ground, unless he is belayed in some way. Any tasloi caught on broken branches have an effective dexterity of 15 for these checks.

It should be made clear to the PCs that movement is difficult in the platform village, and their movement rates are reduced by 3 to reflect this (movement rates are normal in the clearing below the village). Tasloi use their climbing movement rate any time they are in the platform village, except for the clearing itself. For the most part, the tasloi try to stay off the ground.

The village is susceptible to fire. If a platform catches fire, the tasloi quickly move to another tree, cutting away any branch walkways to prevent the fire from spreading. If a tree catches fire, 1-4 tasloi attempt to cut away that tree with wood axes.

D1. Lookout Platform. If they leave Ise-Ko village in the early afternoon, the party should reach the tasloi village around sunset, assuming a movement rate of 9-12 in rugged terrain. If the PCs follow the escaping tasloi up the rope ladder, read the following to the players:

> Reaching the top of the platform, you are astounded by the view. You can see for miles: the setting sun on the lake, the torchlights of the village on its western banks, and faint flashes of ghostly light on the island of Miyashima to the north.
>
> This platform is slightly higher than the others, and you can clearly see that all the other platforms are covered with tarps of sewn hides. You also note that two of the half-dozen fir trees support a huge platform that is completely tented.
>
> Standing at the northern corner of your platform is a hanging plate of bronze that evidently serves as a gong. A branch extends off the platform to the east, where it crosses the branch of a larger platform.

The tasloi who were supposed to be lookouts against intruders (such as the PCs) have a 3-in-8 chance of being soundly asleep on the neighboring platform (area D3). In this case, unless the fleeing tasloi from area C reaches area D1, the gong has not been used to alert the village. Any PCs sounding it will only announce their own presence as intruders. If the lookouts are here, two of the tasloi attempt to hold off the party while the third escapes east and heads for the large tented platform (area D9).

Tasloi (3): AC 6; hp 7, 4, 3; net, short sword; other statistics as given in "The Miyashima Trail."

There is nothing else of interest on this platform beside the view. From this point on, however, any references to time in the boxed passages should be corrected by the DM if the party falls too far behind or stops to rest for more than a few hours. A friendly reminder that Kiyoyasu will be dead soon may inspire the PCs to pick up their pace.

D2. War Trophies.

Twenty feet from the west entrance to the village clearing are three bamboo stakes, about 6' high. Sitting at eye level atop the stakes are the heads of a human and two tasloi. The human was probably another of the young men sent by the village. Under the stakes is a sign written in a scratchy, primitive script.

The sign is written in tasloi and reads: "Intruders and traitors will die here." S'Kri-Ta's intent is more to boost morale within the families of the band than to scare away intruders ("traitors" refers to any tasloi who disobeys S'Kri-Ta), so the sign is written in tasloi and not Common.

D3. Warriors' Platform.

This platform is completely covered by a tarp made of animal hides sewn together. The only openings are at the east and west, where branch-vine walkways extend to other platforms, and above a small entryway for the rope ladder that is attached to the south end of the platform. The floor is covered with furs, and tossed upon these are gnawed and cracked bones, empty wooden bowls, various weapons, and three sleeping tasloi.

All the adult male tasloi live on this platform, since platforms for families (area D11) have not yet been completed. The tasloi are working on them slowly, between hunting.

The tarp covering the platform is woven together with spider silk and animal sinew, but unless closely inspected, the PCs will not notice this. The bones and bowls are left over from meals and have not yet been cleaned up by the females as is normally done twice a month. The weapons are five javelins, a short sword, and two small shields. Fourteen furs (as described in area D5) cover the floor.

The tasloi from area D1 may be sleeping here instead of keeping a lookout against intruders. The rough-hewn boards of the platform squeak loudly whenever anyone walks across, waking the tasloi. Thieves may attempt to move silently across the floor with a −10% penalty. If awakened, the tasloi attempt to escape through the eastern exit in the same round but cannot attack until the next round thanks to drowsiness, though they sleep with weapons in hand.

D4. Kitchen/Larder.

This platform is tarp-covered as well, except for openings to walkways leading in from the west, south and northeast. The southern branch-vine walkway crosses the center of the clearing and appears to lead to the largest platform of the village.

Hanging from vines coming through the tarp are cooking spoons, meat cleavers, and slabs of fresh meat. A wooden box 6' long and half filled with salt stands open in the northwest corner. Stacks of dirty wooden bowls lie next to the box, partially covering a sack of bad onions. Standing with meat cleavers in hand are two female tasloi, who have dropped a large tray of roasted meat at their feet.

The two female cooks can fight as well as males and waste no time doing so, raising loud screams that alert the tasloi in area D7 and the guards on the chieftain's platform (area D9). If no alarm has been raised, the DM may check to see if the cooks are surprised, with normal modifiers. If the tasloi from the warriors' platform made it this far, the cooks attempt to hold off the party long enough for the male to reach the chieftain's platform with his warning.

Tasloi females (2): hp 4, 5; knife; other statistics as given in "The Miyashima Trail."

The meat is of an unknown animal, and is enough to feed five people for a week, though wise PCs will not touch it (remind them of the dead villager). In the box of salt are preserved racks of ribs from a pair of wild pigs, enough to feed another four people for a week. There are four meat cleavers, other than the ones the cooks are wielding, that can be used as weapons (use statistics for knife).

D5. Cooking Fires. This portion of the clearing is composed of three fire rings used for cooking. One ring contains a iron cauldron of meat boiling over hot coals. Hides are stretched to dry over four wooden frames, and scraping tools lie on the ground nearby. Another ring holds a pot of the dark, inky substance the tasloi use to give furs a pure black color. A PC drinking any of this dye must save vs. poison or lose 2-8 hp. The furs will bring 1 tael each in the marketplace, despite the slightly foul odor of the dye. All of the black furs found in the village have this slight odor and are consequently worth only 1 tael as well.

D6. Empty Platform. This platform was designed as an intermediate guard post but is not currently manned.

D7. Female/Young Living Platform. All the females and young sleep here and on the neighboring platform (area D8) until the family platforms are completed. This platform is for mated females and their young only; the other platform is for unmated females (any who do not have young).

The floor is sparsely covered with 10 of the black furs, and wooden bowls lie about on uncovered floor planks. There are currently 22 females and 26 young tasloi on this platform. If they have been alerted to the presence of the party, they all flee by the northern walkway and then scatter into the woods. They will not return for a week, or until a tasloi warrior calls in their native language for them to return. If the women and children are surprised on their platform, they will all attempt to escape except for nine females who fight with knives normally used for skinning

animals and disciplining their young.

Tasloi females (9): hp 6 (×2), 5, 4 (×4), 3 (×2); knife; other statistics as for tasloi cooks, area D4.

It will take five rounds for all the others to escape, whether or not they have been warned. If the party comes in during this time, the tasloi charge the PCs in an attempt to surprise them.

D8. Female Living Platform. This platform can be reached only by way of the walkways from areas D7 and D9. By the time the PCs reach this platform, their presence will have been discovered (through warnings from the other platforms), and the 13 unmated females who live here will have long since departed. However, not everything living has left this platform.

This platform is exceedingly dark, especially in its northeast corner. Light comes in through the walkway openings to the north, east and south, but there is no other light source. Discarded scraps of cloth and empty wine pots lie on the dark furs that layer the creaky wooden floor. There is no sign of movement within, only the occasional glint of metal coins scattered on the floor.

Two giant spiders lurk in the shadows. They hang above the northern and western entryways and will wait until the party enters the tented area to pounce on them from behind in an attempt at surprise. If the PCs carry a lit torch into the tarp, the spiders will not wait until the party is completely inside, but immediately attack the torch bearer as he enters. Their webs cover the ceiling.

There are 15 furs lining the floor, and scattered on them are 36 yuan and a necklace of silver and mother-of-pearl worth 5 tael.

Giant spiders (2): INT low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 3, web 12; HD 4+4, hp 20, 16; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA poison; SZ l; ML 13; XP 650; MC.

D9. Chieftain's Platform. If the tasloi makes it out of area D4 alive, his screams of alarm mix with those of the two female cooks to be heard by all the tasloi in this area. Since the walkway from area D4 crosses the clearing at its widest point, the webbed-together branches are relatively flimsy; they have been woven so that they may be easily severed. When the spider-silk ties are cut, the branches snap back to their natural angles, causing anybody on the walkway to make a dexterity check on 1d20 at −2 or be flung into the air.

If the tasloi makes it to the center of this walkway, he wrap his body around the branch and cuts the webbing in one round. If possible, he waits until at least one PC has stepped onto the platform before cutting the ties.

Observant PCs will notice that the rope ladder attached to the northeastern end of this platform has several small brass bells tied to its upper length, which make an alarmingly loud jingle if anyone tries to climb quietly. There is a cumulative 30% chance per round that one of the 10 tasloi in the tent will hear the bells and cut away the rope ladder while the PCs are still trying to climb up. Anyone attempting missile attacks from the ladder suffers a −5 to-hit penalty (the tasloi have partial cover, and firing a missile weapon from a dangling rope ladder adds to the difficulty).

This platform is over 50' long and 30' wide, requiring two huge firs to support it. Its tarps form a single large tent, the edges of which end a foot above the ends of the platform, where they are tied down. The platform under the tent is almost completely dark, as the tasloi prefer their homes that way.

The tasloi wait until the PCs enter the tent before attacking, so they do not suffer their −1 penalty to attacking in daylight. The wooden planks of this platform do not squeak like the other platforms; they are well fitted and polished smooth. Except for the easternmost 10', the boards are completely covered by black furs. Underneath one of these furs is a hole in the floor that can be detected only if the furs are picked up or a *find traps* spell is used. However, the hole is a small one, better suited for tasloi. Any PC stumbling into the hole may make a dexterity check on 1d20 to avoid falling completely through. Instead of falling to the forest floor, the character becomes stuck in the hole, requiring a full round to pull himself out.

S'kri-Ta and Nuida, along with the 10 best warriors of the band, are present here whenever the PCs arrive.

Tasloi (10): AC 5; hp 8 (×4), 7 (×3), 6 (×3); javelin (×6), short sword (×4); other statistics as given in "The Miyashima Trail."

S'kri-Ta (tasloi chieftain): AC 5; HD 5; hp 27; THAC0 14; Dmg by weapon type +2; XP 270; shield, *short sword +1;* other statistics as given in "The Miyashima Trail."

The chief also owns a *wind fan* left behind by an absentminded tengu who used to live in the clearing (see *Oriental Adventures,* page 128, or the *Monstrous Compendium,* Kara-Tur appendix). S'kri-Ta will use his fan as the party enters the tent in an effort to catch the PCs off guard and blow them off the northeastern end of the platform. The other tasloi anticipate this action and brace themselves during the first round, holding their ground while they attack.

There are also two keys on a chain around the chief's neck: one of new copper and one of ancient green. After using the *wind fan,* S'kri-Ta tries to hide in the shadows of the western corner of the tent, waiting for an opportunity to attack someone from behind. The other 10 tasloi know he is hiding and attack the PCs from the south and east so they face the opposite direction. The shaman Nuida enters the fight at this point.

Nuida (tasloi shaman): HD 3 (casts spells as 5th-level cleric); hp 13; THAC0 17; Dmg by spell or weapon type; XP 420; knife; Spells: *cure light wounds, entangle, protection from good, charm person or mammal, hold person, silence 15' radius, spike growth;* other statistics as given in "The Miyashima Trail."

Between shouted phrases in broken Common ("Die, human dogs!"), Nuida casts his spells. He starts by casting *protection from good* on himself, then *charm person or mammal* and *hold person* spells on the two party members who appear to be the most powerful (the DM can choose the target PCs randomly). He then casts *entangle* and *spike growth* on the vegetation around the PCs, saving his *silence 15' radius* spell for enemy spell-casters and the *cure light wounds* spell for himself. As a last resort, Nuida uses his knife in combat.

All tasloi here will fight to the death, having nowhere else to retreat to. The tent is sparsely furnished, consisting of 20 black furs covering the floor, six shields and 10 javelins strapped to the easternmost tree trunk, and a rattan chair that serves as S'kri-Ta's throne. Next to the chair is a locked wooden box with iron bindings. The key of new copper that S'kri-Ta wears will open this box, which contains (from top to bottom) a bolt of light-green silk, a bag full of unfinished pieces of jade worth 3 ch'ien total, and three cash strings of

100 tael each. There is also a golden bracelet with five rubies set in it, worth 330 tael.

If he wishes, the DM can also leave a map, stained green with corrosion from the old copper key around S'kri-Ta's neck, detailing a locked iron chest in the treasury of Miyashima, as an introduction to other adventures.

D10. Nuida's Platform.

> This platform is connected to the southern tip of the chieftain's platform (area D9) by a walkway a little wider than the others, and with more vines for handholds along its side. The platform is barely 5' × 10', nestled in the top of a tall cedar tree. Under the ragged tarp are piles of neglected papers, rat-chewed books and water-ruined scrolls. The stench of an open bag of bones and bird's heads fills the air. Mangy, undyed furs partially cover huge cracks between the floorboards. A live squirrel paces around the perimeter of a small bamboo cage.

This is the shaman's platform, where he does the bulk of his "study." Nuida can barely read Common, and as this is the language in which most of his books are written, he keeps himself entertained with his bones and pet squirrel. Somehow, he has collected four volumes on Kozakuran history that were originally in the library on Miyashima. The histories go into the obscure lineages of the lords of various provinces, and many legends are confused with history. To properly read and understand this old text takes knowledge of Old Common and a minimum intelligence of 13. (The DM can also use these volumes to involve the PCs in later adventures.)

Most of the scrolls, tied together with strips of cotton, are waterlogged and ruined, but one in the center of the pile is undamaged. This scroll contains the spells *flame walk* and *pacify*. If the PCs have not yet found the Player's Map, they will find it here, but with the word "Treasury" water-smeared and illegible (the DM can block it out on the map).

The remainder of the papers and books are too damaged to be of any use. Inside the bag of bones and bird's heads is a small leather-wrapped vial; it is a potion of *chiang lung control*. The squirrel is starving and will run off to gnaw at the first thing available if set free.

D11. Unfinished Platforms. These platforms are scattered around the clearing and can be reached only by vines stretched from tree to tree. Hatchets, adzes, and hammers of human craftsmanship lie with crudely carved planks of wood on the platforms. To reach the level of these platforms, the PCs must climb the trees. Once the platforms are reached, there is a 40% chance they will not hold any PC weighing more than 100 lbs. If a platform gives way, any PCs standing on it must make a successful dexterity check on 1d20 or fall 40' (unless belayed).

E. The Miyashima Bridge.

> The moon is nearly full, lighting the trail with its ghostly pallor. Among the bamboos and cedar, you see small clearings in the woods where lone enoki trees stand, given respectful space by their neighbors. Finally, a mile and a half beyond the tasloi village, you see the glistening waters of Ise-ko. Before you stands a bridge of old gray planks with handrails that slouch out toward the water. The bridge stretches at least 500' across the moon-painted lake, ending at the dark silhouette of Miyashima. Beyond the red *torii* at the island's entrance, you can make out faint flashes of light in the darkness.
>
> A large figure steps out of the trees and blocks your view of the island. You recognize the breed of this terrible monster instantly: an oni. He stands 7' tall, the single horn on his head stabbing into the night air. The oni blinks all three eyes, laughing.
>
> "Well, well! It seems like somebody has been telling stories about Miyashima again. I really don't mind. Why, I haven't eaten a human in . . . four days!" The monster breaks into hideous laughter as the fog rolls across the bridge behind him.

Like all hengeyokai, Mad Gyoji speaks the language of the oni. A few years ago, he made a deal with this monster. If Toyo the oni would guard Miyashima against intruders, he could eat any would-be visitors he stopped. So far, it has been a profitable relationship for both sides. Toyo has done his job quite well, as the human he refers to having eaten four days ago was one of the three young fishermen sent by the *mura* (the tasloi caught only two of the villagers).

Toyo, common oni: INT average; AL LE; AC 4; MV 9; HD 8; hp 34; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 3-10/3-10; SA spells; SZ L; ML 13; XP 1,400; MC/Kara-Tur.

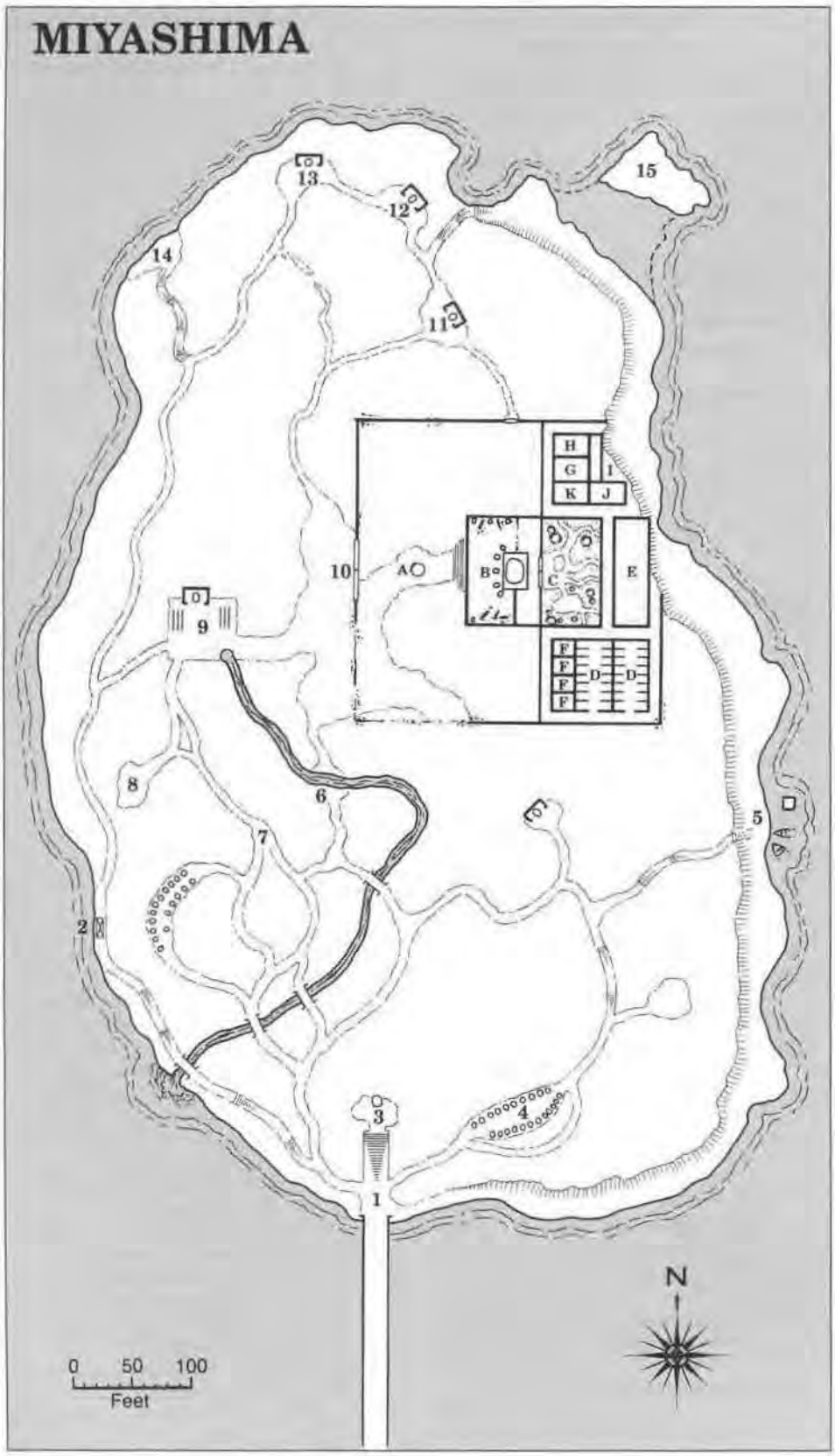
Toyo can cast *polymorph self* and *fly* three times a day, become *invisible* twice a day, use *cloud trapeze* once a day, and *cause fear* at will. He will attempt to *cause fear* while still laughing at the PCs, then attack with his two swords anyone resisting the fear. If the battle turns in the party's favor, Toyo becomes *invisible* and *polymorphs* himself into a more lethal monster. If he is about to die, he tries to use *cloud trapeze* to get well away from Ise-ko. Once Toyo is defeated, the party may travel across the bridge unhindered.

Miyashima

> You travel across the bridge, careful not to trust your weight to the ancient handrails as you stare into the dark waters. Occasionally, an iris petal drifts under the old bridge, like a watchful eye floating by. Just 30' before you reach the shore of the island, you pass under a huge *torii* with peeling vermillion paint that straddles the bridge. It stands at least 20' high out of the shallow waters near the shore, a survivor of storms and power struggles. As you walk under the *torii*, you are surrounded by fireflies, which scatter and fly away as you step off the bridge and onto the misty soil of Miyashima.

When Namikami and Nagikami stirred the seas from the Heavenly Bridge and created the island of Shinkoku, the last droplet of brine to fall off the Heavenly Jeweled Spear landed in an enchanted lake, forming the island of Miyashima. The island was later a gift from Nagikami to his daughter, the sun goddess Amaterasu, who made it a place of beauty for her people to enjoy. Shrines of the Eight Million Gods were placed throughout the green island, but the Temple of Amaterasu was the most prominent of them. The island was named Miyashima, "Temple Island."

Though the dawn goddess is usually honored with shrines like the other Eight Million Gods, this temple was constructed by the early Kanchai school of the Way of Enlightenment, which honors many of the spirits and rituals of the Eight Million Gods. During the



reigns of the emperors Gosoku and Nijo, the Kanchai school held a large *shoen* that included Ise-ko. Miyashima was the chief temple and center of power of the *shoen* until Nobunaga, the shugo-daimyo of the province, destroyed Miyashima and usurped the *shoen* for his own family.

Other than historians and the remaining Kanchai priests in the northern parts of the province, the island temple has been forgotten. The gods and spirits seem to have forgotten Miyashima also—though they have not.

The island itself is a craggy rock jutting out of the water. From the main entrance at the south (area 1), the trails meander uphill through beautiful and haunting greenery until they converge at the summit of the island, where the Temple of Amaterasu sits.

All types of trees crowd for space on this island, but the most common are walnut, oak, cypress and bamboo. Wherever there is not a clearing or a trail, trees have sprung up; where there are no trees, blackberry and *hagi* bushes block the way, halving normal movement. There is also a grove of extremely rare enoki trees (area 7) on Miyashima. These trees are characterized by hollow trunks and a lack of foliage. These ghostly enoki have attracted several kitsune kasumi (see the sidebar for more information), who have been left here as guardians by the fox-god Sagashi. But more interesting than all the spirits and creatures on this abandoned island is Mad Gyoji.

Mad Gyoji has taken all the resources of the island he could find and put them to his own uses. The past 40 years have given him plenty of time to do so, despite spending a large part of that time honing his magical skills as a wu jen.

He has also found the many tiny trails that lead all over the island. These trails allow the hengeyokai to travel anywhere on the island at full speed without being detected or followed, as they are impassable by humans. After the first sighting of Mad Gyoji in area 2, he will not be encountered until the party reaches the library in the Temple of Amaterasu (area 10).

The original reason Mad Gyoji chose to be banished to Miyashima was not to gain revenge but to prove his innocence. He could not tell the truth to the villagers—that the wicked merchant Fukuda was in fact a ninja who had blackmailed him—without revealing

that he was a fox hengeyokai.

For a long time before his banishment, Mad Gyoji had wondered why he was not of an evil nature like the others of his kind. After reading legends of Sagashi, the fox-god guardian of Miyashima, Gyoji discovered that he was a direct descendant of this god. He also learned that a golden stature engraved with the god's full name, Gyoji Sagashi, stood in the hidden treasury of Miyashima. After 20 years of searching and studying the records of Miyashima, he gave up this quest and started to seek consolation in revenge. His reading of ancient legends reminded him about an evil spirit called an ikiryo.

Unfortunately, the PCs will not be able to stop the ikiryo that is killing Kiyoyasu by merely defeating Mad Gyoji or informing him of the ikiryo's existence. On the contrary, Mad Gyoji is quite aware of this special ikiryo, as he consciously created it by using an *ema of wishes* (in area 9; see the sidebar for more information) in conjunction with his scrolls and the lexicon of spirits (area 10). With all this powerful magic, he was able to create a more deadly ikiryo, one able to kill several victims, so long as the victims are heirs to the rank of village *myoshu*.

But such hateful magic has its price. For every week the ikiryo exists, the evil spirit drains some of Mad Gyoji's life force (one point from each of his ability scores). Most important, if the ikiryo is destroyed before its work is finished, Gyoji will die; he will also die if the ikiryo slays all the males of Kiyoyasu's family. Mad Gyoji has thus ensured his own death with his revenge.

In addition to being abnormally powerful, the ikiryo is also harder to destroy. Its spiritual form must be learned through a spell of *true sight*, which will show the form of a fox over the victim's head. This form must be named (which is learned from the *true sight* spell) when using an *exorcism* spell to permanently banish it. An *ema of wishes* can also be used to banish the spirit, if it is placed before a shrine of Namikami or Amaterasu and the *wish* is specifically to banish the ikiryo, not just "a curse."

Shukenja will be a great font of information on Miyashima. If they are worshippers of the Eight Million Gods or the Kanchai sect of the Way of Enlightenment (see the *Kara-Tur* boxed set, Volume II, page 145), they are automatically able to name the gods and their general areas of influence when their shrines are encountered. If they are followers of other religions, they can make a wisdom check on 1d20 to name the god or spirit, unless the god is a commonly known one. They will know the function and purpose of any religious articles, like *ema*, ancestral markers, and purification wells. They also have a percentage chance (25% plus 5% per level) of noticing something slightly wrong with a shrine, or something different from what is normally found in shrines or temples.

Shukenja will be appalled at the extreme neglect or destruction of most of the shrines on Miyashima, and will feel compelled to try to clean or leave offerings (*o-sonae*) at them. Leaving offerings and prayer at a shrine takes one turn, and attempting to lightly clean and restore a shrine takes 1-8 turns. The other PCs may need to remind the shukenja that time is limited, and only so many shrines can be attended to. There are many shrines on Miyashima, but only a few must be cleaned or attended to for the party to succeed.

1. Entrance.

You are standing in a roughly circular clearing with a 20' radius. The southern shore of the island stretches out of sight to the east around a rising cliff. To the west and northeast, 10'-wide dirt paths wind uphill and out of sight. Directly to the north is a set of stone steps, 20' wide and 40' long. You can see the feet of a large bronze statue at the summit of the stairs. A thick forest of cypress, birch, and oak trees blocks any better view of the island. Between the trees and the bamboo, the ground is blanketed by *hagi* and thick mists that tumble over into the pathways. Through the fog to the north, you see more flashes of light and the skeletal silhouettes of strange, leafless trees.

2. Cliffside Path.

The dirt path is punctuated by two flights of stone steps followed by a small bridge crossing a stream that tumbles into the lake below. After climbing two more steep flights of steps, you emerge atop a stone walkway that teeters on the edge of a 60' cliff. Below you and stretching to the west are the waters of Ise-ko, partially shrouded in the night fog. The stone pathway continues along the cliff for another 40', after which it leads northeast and back into the island. You also see a bright red fox watching you intently from farther along the walkway. When it realizes you have noticed it, the fox dashes away down the path.

The red fox is Mad Gyoji, who is spying on the PCs in order to figure out how best to deal with them. Any attempts to follow Mad Gyoji in his fox form are futile, as movement through the dense trees and brush is at half the normal rate. See area 10 for details on Mad Gyoji's movements after he has been spotted.

The cliff is not only steep, it is about to collapse. A successful attempt to find traps shows that several of the walkway's stones have been pried loose and the mortar between them chiseled out. There is a 20' length of walkway (marked as a pit trap on the map) that has a 20% chance of collapsing as each person crosses the middle of this section. This chance per person is raised by 1% per pound over 160 lbs. If the section collapses, all PCs on it must make successful dexterity checks on 1d20 or fall 60' into the lake below, taking 2d6 hp damage. A saving throw vs. paralyzation reduces this damage by half, and a successful proficiency check negates the damage, allowing the PC to safely dive into the water.

Unless the PCs have paid their respects at the shrine of the lake spirit (area 13), they will find something waiting for them in the water. As soon as the fallen party members catch their breath, they are attacked by a giant carp nearly as ancient as the lake itself. Though the water here is deep (and therefore preferred by the carp), there is a ledge, approximately 3' wide, just below the water level at the base of the island. The carp will not attack anyone standing on this ledge.

If the ancient carp's stomach is cut open, the party will find a skeletal hand holding part of a fishing rod and wearing two identical rings of amethyst and silver. One is worth 5 ch'ien; the other is a *ring of water breathing*. The ledge is visible by anyone on the trail above, and the rough cliff gives a 10% bonus to any PC attempting to climb walls.

Giant carp: INT animal; AL N; AC 6;

MV swim 18; HD 9; hp 55; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2-20; SA swallow whole; SZ L; ML 9; XP 4,000; MC/Kara-Tur.

3. Emperor's Statue.

> From the top of the stairs, you can see the whole bronze statue whose feet you spied from the clearing below. This 20'-high sculpture portrays a middle-aged man in courtly dress, the imperial crest engraved upon his robes. Ivy and *hagi* have grown completely unchecked here, partially filling up what was once a large clearing where people worshipped.

The emperor of Kozakura is reputed to be of direct lineage from Amaterasu, and therefore considered to be a living god. This statue portrays the emperor Nijo, the reigning emperor at the time when Miyashima was ransacked.

4. Ancestral Statues.

> The trail opens into a clearing roughly 20' wide, with rows of small stone statues standing to either side. Each of the statues stands about 2' tall. They depict men and women in all types of dress, the faces worn smooth and devoid of any detail. Cracked bowls and sake cups lie in front of the statues, and shreds of clothing hang on some of the stone figures. The mildewed and weather-worn remnants of offerings are tipped over and scattered about. You hear the clatter of a tea cup rolling from one of the statues and turn to see a dozen rats of horrid size scrambling toward you.

There are 12 giant rats in all. Hungry as always, they attack immediately and do not stop until killed. The statues are representations of the honored ancestors of different families. Before Miyashima was quarantined, their reverent descendants would care for the statues. Many of the figures have been dressed up with necklaces, and quality pottery was used to hold offerings of food and other valuables. A quick search will produce four necklaces worth 5, 3 (×2), and 2 ch'ien. The PCs can also find 4 ch'ien in loose change and six undamaged pieces of pottery worth 2 ch'ien total if a longer check is made. However, any PC caught looting the ancestral statues will face an eight point honor loss, and will retain two points of this loss even if the valuables are put back.

Giant rats (12): INT semi; AL N(E); AC 7; MV 12, climb 6; HD ½; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA disease; SZ T; ML 7; XP 15; MC.

5. The Fishing Shed.

> You are traveling on a narrow strip of silty shore pinned between the lake and the cliff. Rounding the southern cliff and heading north, you see the shore widen to about 30'. After another 200' of travel, you find a half-collapsed staircase climbing the cliff to the west. Directly to the north, the shore narrows to about 15' again, but the water offshore is only leg deep. Exactly 10' from this shore is a half-submerged shed and the rotting keels of two rowboats.

The water is very placid and home to a swarm of leeches. Any PCs wading out to the shed have a 15% chance of attracting the 10' swarm; this chance is cumulative for each person, every round they are in the water. Any PCs who are attacked take 1d10 hp damage each round they are in the swarm. Any damage from an area-effect attack doing 10 or more hp damage will disperse them.

Leeches (300): INT non; AL N; AC 10; MV swim 1; HD/hp special; THAC0 n/a; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA drain blood; SZ L; ML 5; XP 15; MC.

The rotten shed is still standing, a testament to the skill of the carpenter who built it. All the nets and fishing equipment once contained here have long rotted or rusted away. However, a single dry shelf holds a wooden box in good condition. The box contains five fishing lures of superior quality. Any person who fishes using these lures adds 4 to any fishing proficiency check made; a successful check means that person has caught enough fish for another two people in addition to the normal 1-6 people. Each of these lures is worth at least 4 ch'ien, and for a fisherman they are priceless.

6. Washed-out Bridge.

> The path is pleasantly lined with gnarled peach trees; it seems that negligence has actually made parts of this island more beautiful. However, you seem to have reached a dead end. The bridge that used to cross the rapidly running stream before you has been burned down. The water at this crossing is about shoulder deep and 15' wide, with equal amounts of sloshy mud on both sides. Looking into the frantic waters of the stream, you can see the algae-covered stones at the bottom.

This stream is enchanted, emanating from the purification well in area 9. Any PC attempting to wade across will be swept downstream unless he is tied to a rope held by PCs totalling 20 or more strength points. Upon reaching each of the four footbridges that lie downstream, the PC may make a saving throw vs. paralyzation, with success indicating that the PC has managed to get a grasp on the bridge pilings and can pull himself ashore. If he fails all four throws, the PC plummets over the waterfall and into Ise-ko. The DM can treat this like a fall from the walkway in area 2. In any case, the stream flows much too swiftly for anyone to wade across here, and the mud prevents any attempts to jump across.

7. The Enoki Trees. If the PCs travel on either of the two paths that join the northern path leading to area 9, read the following passage aloud:

> The northward path has become mistier, and less than 20' in front of you is a thick fog bank. You can see nothing beyond it except the trail and flashes of ghostly blue light. Approaching the fog bank, you realize you are in the middle of a grove of skeletal enoki trees. Strange pale shapes dance among the trees and across the path. The shapes emerge from the fog, revealing themselves as ghostly, pure-white foxes running toward you. You see the flashes of their pale blue foxfire breath as they silently rush toward you in the thickening fog. The only thing you can hear are the pine crickets and your own nervous breathing.

These are the original night guardians of the island, the kitsune kasumi. Unfortunately, they were of little help during Nobunaga's daylight assault. They will defend this island and are determined to never let humans with weapons on Miyashima again. They completely ignore any party members who have no weapons or PCs who drop

their weapons. Otherwise, they do their duty and defend Miyashima, fighting to the death. If the PCs do not encounter and destroy them here, they will answer the mental summons of Mad Gyoji should he need them.

Kitsune kasumi (10): hp 14, 12, 10 (×2), 9 (×3), 8, 6 (×2); see the sidebar for complete statistics.

8. Burned Shrine. There are small burned shrines lining all the main pathways of Miyashima, but these three shrines are larger ones, meriting additional comment.

> The short walkway ends after about 30′, terminating at a sight that makes the shukenja gasp in horror. At the edge of a 20′ clearing sit the rotten, half-burned timbers that used to house a shrine. Shards of broken pottery and stone tablets are strewn everywhere. From somewhere, the scream of a night heron rings through the woods. A man-sized statue of a god or spirit has been smashed into boulders and fragments. You see a stone arm, a sculpted face cracked from its head, a section of torso. This shrine was one of those intentionally destroyed long ago by the ruthless Nobunaga.

The shukenja will feel very uneasy and realize this shrine is beyond repair. The DM can optionally mention to the shukenja the name of the god to whom the shrine belonged, such as Okuninushi, God of Fertility, or Tsukiyomi, the moon. There is nothing of interest left here, as this shrine was well looted by Nobunaga's soldiers.

9. Shrine of Tadasu no Kami.

> You stand in a rectangular clearing with 50′ sides atop a small summit. Narrow, 10′ pathways lead to the south and southwest, and a 20′-wide path slopes evenly to the east, up the highest slope of the island. The northern edge of the clearing houses a shrine and the statue of a god within it. Unlike most of the shrines on the island, this one is undamaged and even well maintained. Fresh offerings of food and money lie in front of the statue, and fresh incense burns in a small brass brazier. To either side of this shrine are three thin, parallel board walls, 15′ long, each only as tall as a man. Hanging from these boards are hundreds of small wooden plaques. In the southeast corner of the clearing is a large well with a shallow stone trough in front of its western rim. Wooden ladles sit in the trough where the water trickles through from the well. From the ground southeast of the well, a rapid spring gushes downhill and into the trees.

The shrine is very well cared for by Mad Gyoji, who leaves daily offerings and prayers here. The statue portrays a two-faced god, with one face grimacing in fierce anger and the other in an aspect of gentle compassion. This god is Tadasu no Kami, the "God Who Rectifies."

The plaques that cover the six bulletin boards are *ema*, prayer plaques dedicated to the god. They are rectangular and flat, each approximately 6″ across and 4″ high. The fronts of all these *ema* have been given the stamp of the temple and painted with a bull, the animal of a particular calendar year. The backs are inscribed with various requests for justice, health, or victory.

Any shukenja who examines these boards will quickly spot something unusual. One of the bulletin boards contains *ema* that are not as weatherworn or rotten as the others, although they are also painted with the year of the bull on the front. Any of the PCs can also find 20 *ema* with blank backsides facing outward. Anyone proficient in calligraphy will notice that these more recent *ema* have all been written by the same hand, nearly all of them requests for justice at the hands of Tadasu no Kami.

A nonshukenja who searches these boards for one hour, or a shukenja searching for 10 minutes, will discover two *ema* of rare, hand-polished wood decorated with extraordinary paintings of bulls that almost seem alive. Both of these are *ema of wishes* (see sidebar). While searching the Temple of Amaterasu, Mad Gyoji found these magical items in storage with a group of unaged *ema*. One is blank, but the other is scribed in the tiny, now-familiar handwriting of the other recent ema.

This special ema bears a different type of request: "Help me, Tadasu no Kami, God Who Rectifies. If not justice, grant me revenge against the wicked

Kitsune Kasumi

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Any forest
FREQUENCY: Very rare
ORGANIZATION: Group
ACTIVITY CYCLE: Nocturnal
DIET: Nil
INTELLIGENCE: Average to very (9-11)
TREASURE: Nil
ALIGNMENT: Neutral (variable)
NO. APPEARING: 2-24
ARMOR CLASS: 6
MOVEMENT RATE: 18
HIT DICE: 2
% IN LAIR: 80%
TREASURE TYPE: Nil
THAC0: 19
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-6 (×2)
SPECIAL ATTACKS: +3 to reaction rolls
SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 20%
SIZE: S (3′ long)
MORALE: Elite (13)
XP VALUE: 190

The kitsune kasumi, or "mist foxes," are minor nature spirits associated with misty places. They are beautiful, pure-white foxes with slim and delicate bodies. They usually congregate at night around dead trees in remote groves and abandoned fields, hiding among the trunks and logs in gaseous form during the day. They are highly territorial and will attack any intruders at night. If their grove of trees is destroyed, they will likewise be destroyed, leaving only a faint wisp of mist.

Similar to the hoarfox, they are often spotted at a distance by the pale blue foxfire that they continually breathe. This magical flame adds +2 to the damage (1-4 hp) caused by the kitsune kasumi's bite attack. They are perfectly silent, even when fighting, and their speed and agility give them a +3 to any reaction rolls and allow them to use their bite attack twice a round.

Kitsune kasumi may assume gaseous form at will, making them nearly invisible in the mist except for their foxfires. During combat, there is a 20% chance each round that they will shift to this form instead of making any attacks for that round. Attackers will not know this change has occurred until after the fox spirits have attacked, since their gaseous forms are nearly identical in appearance to their normal ones.

family of the *myoshu* Kazuo. Bring the ikiryo that will wither him and his blood away." The writing is especially spidery, and the ink glitters with flecks of silver. This is the *ema* used by Mad Gyoji to help create the ikiryo. The additional magic involved in doing this means that destroying this *ema* will not destroy the ikiryo, but will prevent it from attacking any victims after Kiyoyasu dies.

The trough with the ladles is used for ritual purification before entering the Temple of Amaterasu (area 10), which lies up the hill to the east. Perfectly clear water swirls from the top of the well and into the trough, where it is sprinkled on a person before he approaches the temple. This well is enchanted and will heal 1-3 hp from any character of good alignment if its waters are used properly. The magical well can work only once a week on any PC, and will not work if the water is not sprinkled at the trough.

Unfortunately, this blessed well has been tainted by Mad Gyoji. After long and careful research, he placed a water weird inside the well. This malign creature senses the presence of the PCs when they first enter the area, but it will not attack until someone comes within 15' of the well.

Water weird: INT very; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA drowning; SD sharp weapons inflict only 1 hp damage, half damage from fire-based attacks; SZ L; ML 13; XP 420; MC.

If the PCs defeat the "evil water spirit" and look into the well, they will see a glitter on the wall about 6' down. Sitting in a small recess are a pair of intricate gold and ruby *bracers of defense AC 7*.

10. Temple of Amaterasu. When the party first enters the clearing west of the temple structure, read the following to the players:

> The trees above the narrow trail unclasp their wooden hands, and you find yourselves standing in a clearing that runs roughly 200' north and south. Footpaths trickle in from the north, south, and west. The blanket of trees has been pulled back about 50' to the west, revealing the remnants of the Temple of Amaterasu.
>
> What conquest has ravaged, time has further deteriorated. The walled perimeter is overgrown to the north of the main gate. But the locked doors, 20' of vigilant oak, are a dark sentinel standing useless next to piles of rubble that once made up the southwest section of the outer wall. Visible through this breach are the ends of veranda-covered walkways that trace the insides of the walls northward and eastward. A natural trail leads to a well before disappearing into the fog of a huge overgrown courtyard. Through the haze you see a rust-furred fox dart down the trail. Silhouetted in the fog is the imposing temple building itself, and the jagged ruins of the rest of the complex behind it.

These are the remnants of the once-great Temple of Amaterasu. Nobunaga, being a shrewd tactician, knew that though the doors were made of strong oak, the walls of the temple were scarcely more than ornamental. With relatively little effort, he destroyed the wall south of the main gate and scoured the temple for its treasures, indiscriminately continuing his desecration of various shrines.

The evil shugo-daimyo had inspired his troops to such a violent frenzy that before he could search the temple, they had burned down the pagodas that once stood outside its gates and actually burned down the northeastern part of the temple itself. Though Nobunaga was able to hold his troops back long enough to allow the Kanchai priests to put out the fires in the temple, all of the upper levels of the temple collapsed. After completing the slaughter of the priests and the temple guardians, he made a fruitless search for the treasury of Miyashima. To this day, the spirit guardians that still watch over the island have kept that treasure safe.

Almost as soon as the party stepped foot on the island, Mad Gyoji was aware of their presence. On Miyashima, he is free to run the woods in his fox form, and he does so every night. He quickly caught the scent of the PCs and has been monitoring their actions from afar. Since he recognizes none of the party members, he is trying to determine if they have been sent by the village to stop his curse, or if they are simply treasure seekers.

As soon as anyone sees him in his fox form, Gyoji darts through the main hall (area 10B) and the meditation garden (area 10C) to the library (area 10E), where he quickly prepares a test of the PCs' intentions. He then retreats to his laboratory (area 10G), where he assumes his bipedal form and carefully observes the party through his scrying pool.

If Gyoji sees the Player's Map or hears any talk concerning the treasure of Miyashima, he holds off outright attack to see if the PCs know anything about the location of the treasure. Based on what he learns from scrying the party, Gyoji retreats with his magical items and several spell books, choosing what he believes to be an effective place for an ambush.

If the party discusses breaking the curse or destroying the ikiryo in addition to any loose talk of destroying Mad Gyoji, he prepares to attack the PCs and destroy them before they can search through the temple chambers. Because of Mad Gyoji's scrying, the actions and statements of the party will determine what they find in many of the rooms in the temple, including where they find Mad Gyoji.

Mad Gyoji (wu jen hengeyokai): AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; Wu Jen 9; hp 29; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weap-

Ema of Wishes

This *ema* is a specially prepared plaque made from rare wood, with detailed art painted on its front. It radiates magic heavily and is quickly picked out from other *ema* by its extraordinary beauty. If inscribed on the back with rare, quality ink (minimum value 20 ch'ien) using calligraphy proficiency and then hung near a shrine to the appropriate spirit or god, that spirit will grant the request as a *wish*. For example, a farmer wishing for a rice season free from tai-fun would leave his *ema* to Susano no Mikoto, Fierce Wind Son.

These plaques are recognized by only shukenja and wu jen, as they are extremely powerful items. Only 1-3 *ema of wishes* will be found together, each having room for one *wish* to be inscribed on it. However, if the *wish* is of a continuous or long-term nature, destroying or taking the *ema* from its shrine will end the *wish*. This is done at the risk of invoking the anger of the spirit or god. A *wish* to create something or restore a person to life is not negated by the *ema*'s destruction. XP Value = 1,000

on type; S 11 (15), D 13 (17), C 12 (16), I 14 (18), W 8 (12), Ch 8 (12); ML 18; XP 4,000; sai, *kimono of protection AC 4, ring of flames* (five charges, functions as *fire breath* spell cast at 8th level). His taboos are an inability to swim in any water and a compulsion to change to his fox form once every 24 hours.

When the party meets Gyoji, he is in his bipedal form, the shape he prefers. He carries a sack holding his spell books, which contain the following spells:

1st level: *animate wood*, cloud ladder, comprehend languages, detect magic, drowsy insects, elemental burst*, fiery eyes, ghost light, hail of stone*, hold portal, know history, melt, shield*, unseen servant, wall of fog, warp wood*, water protection.*

2nd level: *animate water, detect evil, detect invisibility*, fire shuriken*, fog cloud, hypnotic pattern, knock, phantasmal force*, pyrotechnics, rope trick, smoky form*, stinking cloud*, whispering air, wind breath.*

3rd level: *animate fire, cloudburst, detect shapechanger, dispel magic, fabricate, feign death, fire rain*, fire wings, hold person*, protection from normal missiles, scry*, steam breath.*

4th level: *bargain, dimension door*, elemental turning, fire enchantment, improved invisibility, wall of bones, wall of fire*.*

5th level: *animate dead, creeping darkness, fire breath*.*

Spells not found in the *Player's Handbook* are from *Oriental Adventures.* Those followed by asterisks are the suggested spells that Mad Gyoji has memorized.

Mad Gyoji is a master of the element of fire, giving him an additional −1 saving-throw modifier and +1 bonus to damage done from any fire-based spells he casts. Gyoji is also accompanied by some of his faithful pets, the kitsune kasumi.

Kitsune kasumi (5): hp 13, 12 (×2), 10 (×2); see sidebar for complete statistics. They will protect their master to the death as he weaves his spells.

By the time the PCs encounter Mad Gyoji, he will have cast any protection spells on himself as well as an obscuring *wall of fog.* While the PCs are looking for him, he strikes first with his *ring of flames.* Gyoji fights wildly and to the death, but not stupidly. His only indulgence in the battle is to confront the party in his bipedal form to give them a brief statement after his first attack:

"Now do you see why I was banished, petty humans? I could not prove my innocence without giving away my secret. They would have killed me because of my appearance alone, if only they had known! You shameful people have forgotten Miyashima, and you have driven off your protectors! For that, you will suffer."

If Mad Gyoji is somehow captured, he breaks down in tears, becoming wholly catatonic until the ikiryo is destroyed or finishes its mission, at which time he himself will die. The kitsune kasumi continue to fight for him, however, until destroyed.

10A. The Well.

This large courtyard has not had the benefit of a gardener in so long that plants have overgrown most of the tiled walkway between the main gate and the open entrance to the temple building. You are standing by a purification well with stagnant, murky waters 30' down and flimsy walls at the top. Directly to the east, a 20'-long flight of stairs leads up to the 30'-wide entrance to the tallest building still standing in the temple complex. It's 50' height stands out starkly against the dark outlines of the partially burned buildings behind it. Through the overgrown courtyard, you can see traces of the northern wall and its inner verandas.

10B. The Main Hall.

You climb the long flight of stairs and pass across the threshold of the main hall. Inside it is dark and cavernous, and your breath echoes off the 40' ceiling. The hall stretches 90' between its north and south walls, which are lined with stone statues of some of the Eight Million Gods. Between 2'-10' tall each, nearly half of these statues are toppled over. Offering trays and pots lie strewn among broken weapon blades on the wooden floor. A huge stone base, 6' tall and 40' wide, lies in the center of the hall, flanked by rotten silk dividers splattered with dark stains.

The statue that stands on top of this stone base captures the attention of everyone instantly: Amaterasu, the Great Goddess of the Rising Sun. She stretches to the ceiling in a posture of gentleness mixed with

fierce pride. Her aspect commands reverence, despite centuries of neglect that reveal her solid-iron construction where the dulled gold leaf has flaked off. Her headdress is a mosaic of light and gold, since an opening in the ceiling allows both moonlight and the dawning sun to shine from behind it.

The stone statues of five guardian gods stand in front of Amaterasu. Four of them have been beheaded, and fragments of granite lie in front of them. The base for a sixth statue sits unoccupied. The center statue is intact, though not as finely carved as its neighbors. As you watch, the rough features of this massive samurai warrior come to life and the statue steps off its pedestal and moves toward you.

The statue is a large stone spirit. Conjured into this statue by Mad Gyoji, it attacks any intruders and fights to the death. It has fed itself on coins left by Mad Gyoji. If the PCs defeat the spirit, they find 165 ch'ien in its dust.

Any shukenja attempting to pray

before the goddess's statue and leave offerings to Amaterasu will take eight turns. Restoring the statue of the goddess will take no less than two days. Mad Gyoji will be able to determine which characters are shukenja by watching the actions of the PCs in the temple.

Lexicon of Spirits

This book is an encyclopedia of spirits, alphabetized in the style of the Kozakura writing system. Due to the technical nature of its script, it can be read by only wu jen or shukenja of greater than 3rd level. Each entry is followed by general information concerning the spirit's habitat, origin, and general nature, as well as random folklore about the spirit, although this information is less reliable than the rest. This can be a very useful item, depending on the amount of information the DM decides to provide under each entry, or if an entry for a particular type of spirit even exists. The lexicon found on Miyashima, however, has the following special entry under "Ikiryo," in addition to the general information that can be found in the *Monstrous Compendium*, Kara-Tur appendix:

"The ikiryo is a psychic extension of feelings of hatred from one person to another. It is thought to be not so much a spirit as a negative channel, since it cannot exist without its creator, though it works independently and without the knowledge of its creator. It continues to exist exactly as long as it takes to drain the life from its victim, usually one to two weeks, unless the ikiryo is exorcised. There is no known way to destroy an ikiryo other than exorcism.

"Rarely, an ikiryo will be derived from such powerful feelings of hate that, with the aid of sorcery, it can become an evil spirit with its own identity, usually taking the form of an animal. This spirit continues to exist long after its first victim is dead and will often seek out new victims, especially the kin of the original victim. This type of ikiryo can be destroyed only after its spirit form has been seen through *true sight*, and this form must then be named in its exorcism. This spirit actually feeds off the life force of its creator; if it is destroyed, its creator dies." GP Value = 500

The hall was ransacked by Nobunaga long ago and completely stripped of anything of value except for the gold leaf on the statue of Amaterasu, which is worth 5,000 ch'ien. Its theft, however, brings a 30-point loss of honor.

Stone spirit (large): INT average; AL NE; AC 1; MV 6; HD 6; hp 37; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3-24; SZ L; ML 12; XP 975; MC/Kara-Tur.

10C. Meditation Garden.

This garden is enclosed by sliding walls to the north, south, and east; a sliding door stands in the center of a wooden wall to the west. Narrow pathways extend in all directions, studded with old tree stumps or smooth stones ideal for sitting on. Although this area was designed as a miniature garden, all of the bonsai have struggled toward a normal size since they have not received the pruning necessary to stunt their growth. There is still something alluring in these awkward trees and moss-covered stones; a true natural beauty rests here.

If Mad Gyoji has already decided that the party intends to kill him, he will ambush the PCs here, accompanied by the kitsune kasumi (see sidebar). Otherwise, he will try to attract the party to the library (area 10E).

10D. Priests' Quarters. If the PCs walk east along the south wall of the temple complex, they come upon two narrow, 8' passageways running 60' north and south. These hallways are lined on either side by dingy gray curtains that close off small living spaces. If any of the curtained rooms are entered, read the following passage aloud:

This small room once served as the living quarters for two temple priests. In an area roughly 12' long and 8' wide sit two rotted *futons*, an oil lamp, an empty bookstand, and a small ancestral shrine. The room's original occupants are still here, evidently murdered in the night by Nobunaga's assassins. However, their skeletal remains are no longer resting. The two skeletons spring toward you, brandishing bo sticks. From behind the curtains of the other living spaces comes the rustling of dry, brittle bones.

There are 18 skeletons in all here, including the two in the first living space explored. Raised from the dead by Mad Gyoji, they have been left here until they are either disturbed by intruders or called by their master. As soon as the first two are disturbed, all the others rise to attack the PCs. There is nothing of interest in the living quarters, as everything of any true value has been taken by Mad Gyoji.

Skeletons (18): INT non; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 8 (×5), 6 (×6), 5 (×3), 3 (×4); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (weapon); SD special; MR special; SZ M; ML special; XP 65; MC.

10E. The Library. The western door to this room is open, revealing the flicker of candle light and a faint rustling sound that can be heard by anyone leaving the meditation garden (area 10C) through the sliding walls. Anyone opening the eastern door from inside the library stands at the brink of a 50' fall to the sandy shore below.

This room is lined with wooden shelves, nearly all of which are empty. A large pile of ashes lies in the center of the floor. Though the northern shelves are empty (their contents were the source of the pile of ashes), a few books of poetry and a treatise on breathing and meditation exercises lie on top of a brittle stack of illegible parchments. Hidden under this stack of papers is the lexicon of spirits (see sidebar), with a felt bookmark stuck in the "ikiryo" entry.

Next to this pile lies an open book titled *Legends of Miyama*, which contains a collection of common folk tales (a great source of future adventures). The book is opened to a brief story about the fox-god Sagashi, Protector of Miyashima and his guardian spirits, the mist foxes. The story concludes by stating "the god's descendants still guard Miyashima to this day."

A dozen origami cranes sit on top of a high shelf on the south wall. A 10' × 4' table sits in the center of the southern end of the room. It is covered by antique maps of Miyama Province, and on top of these are two books and a scattering of blank pages. (If Mad Gyoji has already been encountered, the books will not be here.) Both books are thick and bound in black leather. One is titled "Book of Ancient Curses," the other is "Annotated Inventory, Miyashima." Both books are a *permanent illusion* cast so that if one

book is picked up, both disappear.

Mad Gyoji carefully watches the PCs' actions with his *pool of scrying* to discern which book the PCs prefer. If the PCs possess the Player's Map and appear to prefer the "Inventory" book, Gyoji ambushes the PCs once they have obtained the key to the treasury (area 15). Otherwise, Gyoji meets them in his laboratory (area 10G).

Not all of the blank pages nor the origami cranes are what they seem; some are gohei p'oh.

Gohei p'oh, page form (4): INT semi; AL CE; AC 3; MV fly 9 (C); HD 1+5; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA suffocation; SZ T; ML 10; XP 120; MC/Kara-Tur.

Gohei p'oh, crane form (4): MV fly 24 (A); hp 9; other statistics as given for page form.

The gohei p'oh will not change from their crane or page forms, and remain inert until the PCs have chosen one of the two illusory books on the table.

10F. Guest Rooms.

This room is approximately 12' × 21', its walls lined with beautiful silk screens. A black lacquered table sits to one side, surrounded by a set of violet cushions. Three bedrolls lie on the floor at the other end of the room. This area appears to have been a guest room for dignitaries visiting the temple.

There is nothing else of any interest in these rooms, which is why they are in relatively good shape compared to the rest of the temple; their contents did not interest either Nobunaga or Mad Gyoji.

10G. Laboratory.

This room contains one long table, 6' across and 12' in length. It is covered with glasswork and gourds filled with a motley assortment of substances. Papers written in spidery, scratchy script are scattered across the floor around a shallow, oval-shaped tray filled with water. A burning brazier on the table heats a sealed pot. Beside the brazier is a smoldering block of incense. Resting on a small rack are a dozen neatly sealed vials. Next to a pile of blank *ema*, an inkwell still contains fresh black ink with silver flecks in it. A foxhair brush and the unused portion of the rare ink block lie nearby. An acrid smell fills the air: the smell of blackberries boiled for too long.

The substances in the gourds and vials are rare components worth a total of 6 ch'ien to any alchemist; to anyone else they are worthless. However, one of the 12 vials contains a potion of *vitality*, and another holds a potion of *extra-healing*.

Contrary to their scattered appearance, the papers are a historical study on the destruction of Miyashima, made by Mad Gyoji himself. The scribblings are so messy, however, that it will require two weeks to decipher the papers.

The shallow tray is specifically designed for use with the *scry* spell. When the tray is filled with water, the spell has unlimited duration until the water is disturbed or the spell is stopped by its caster.

The blank *ema* are all nonmagical, but the leftover ink block is worth at least 25 ch'ien, and there is enough fresh ink left in the pan to paint several *ema*. The contents of the pot are exactly what they smell like: blackberries that have been boiled for too long.

10H. Study.

This small room is lit by a pair of large candles set in rice bowls. In one corner is a bedroll and a pile of sour-smelling blankets. The southern screen door is smudged by black handprints and some type of animal tracks, possibly dog or fox prints. A small writing desk at the west side of the room is empty except for a battered book with ripped cloth covers.

The book is Mad Gyoji's diary, spanning the last 50 years. The first entry tells of his arrival in the village of Iseko. After being welcomed into the village, he held "high hopes for the future, but lingering questions." Why wasn't he of an evil character, like other fox hengeyokai?

He eventually discovers that "I am the direct descendant of the fox-god Sagashi, the benevolent protector of Miyashima." Soon after, the diary chronicles the fateful meeting with Fukuda and Gyoji's banishment. He writes that his choice of exile on Miyashima was to enable him to find proof of his relation to the fox-god: something with his family name written on it, anything with the words or signature "Gyoji Sagashi."

The entries after this are sketchy. Some speak of his newfound spirit-friends and servants, the kitsune kasumi. Others concern various theories as to the "location of the treasury." The last entries contain darker, more vengeful words. "If I cannot prove my innocence, then I will call black doom upon that village of hateful humans. I will make Kazuo and his family pay for my sufferings."

Gyoji's final entry outlines his creation of the ikiryo with the help of the lexicon, and ends saying, "If my revenge fails before completing its course, then I will die. But there is nothing else of interest for me here. I must leave Miyashima somehow."

10I. Collapsed Tower. The remnants of this room hang over the eastern cliff of the island. Far below, charred and rotten timbers lie on the shore, all that remains of a huge tower that once crowned the temple and stretched to the sky. The first step into the room goes through the blackened floorboards, warning the party that this room is quite impassable.

10J. Ikebana Room.

This room contains a 20'-long black lacquered table with cushions scattered on the floor around it. Sitting on the table are dried plant cuttings and small trays filled with beds of short spikes. Cracked vases are lined up on another smaller table. This was probably a room used for flower arranging. There are no flowers here now, only a skeleton dressed in orange priest's robes slumped over the table.

10K. Tea and Poetry Room.

This room has two tables in it, both 10' long. On one table rests a jumble of brittle parchment and calligraphy brushes. Sadly, the blood of Kanchai priests has ruined the perfect symmetry of these black-and-white tracings. The skeletons of four priests recline on cushions around this table. The neighboring table contains a beautiful teapot and a single teacup of extraordinary workmanship. A container of green tea sits next to these.

The teacup is truly one-of-a-kind; its value is at least 30 ch'ien. It is also coated with a contact poison that does 4-24 hp damage unless a successful save vs. poison is made for half damage. Mad Gyoji left the poisoned cup here as a trap to anyone who succeeded in sneaking into the castle. The teapot is also of value; it is worth 4 ch'ien.

Inside the orange robe of one of the skeletons is a scroll containing two shukenja spells: *true seeing* and *fate*. Mad Gyoji had no use for the scroll, and so it was left with its dead owner.

11. Shrine of Sagashi.

This clearing opens onto a small shrine that faces southwest. Pathways lead to the north and west, and an overgrown footpath heads southeast. This is another of the few shrines on Miyashima that have been well tended. Offerings of food and incense are all recent, and the shed housing the shrine is in good repair.

Unfortunately, the statue that stands within the shrine is missing its arms and one of the ears of its fox head. A single family marker that reads "Gyoji" stands at the feet of the statue whose base is engraved with the title "Sagashi, God Protector of Miyashima."

Beyond the shrine, you can see the waters of Ise-ko lapping against the rocky isle northeast of Miyashima.

This is the shrine of Sagashi, the fox-god guardian of Miyashima. As a living god, this fox hengeyokai was worshipped here 250 years ago. Though overcome by Bane, the god who helped Nobunaga destroy Miyashima, Sagashi's spirit still watches over the misty temple-island. If the PCs have the Player's Map from area B (or area D10), they will easily find a large stone key hidden under a plank on the southwest corner of the shrine. This is the key to the treasury of Miyashima (area 15), which Sagashi still guards by hiding the key. Only if the party has the map will they find the key, as this enchanted shrine is theft proof. If Gyoji knows of the map and thinks the PCs are merely treasure hunters, he will ambush them here with his kitsune kasumi, waiting until they have the key.

12. Shrine of Namikami.

You enter another clearing with pathways leading northwest and southeast. There is a large shrine here, abused and dilapidated. You peer through the cobwebs and dust to see a statue of carefully carved sandstone, with strong features that are somehow familiar to you. A mood of dejection fills the area; even the flowers here have only the palest blossoms.

You recognize the statue as the goddess Namikami, who stirred the seas with the help of her brother Nagikami, and formed the islands of Kozakura. You would believe that she is mourning the neglect of her shrine if you did not know that Namikami is dead. All that is here is an abandoned shrine to a dead god.

If a shukenja successfully checks to notice anything unusual or remembers the advice of the old woman in the village (whose face looks exactly like the statue's), he will get a very strong urge to clean and repair this shrine. If this is done and offerings are made, the feelings of unhappiness dissipate.

A pearl set in the brow of the statue is noticeable only if the statue is cleaned or inspected. This pearl glows briefly, functioning like a *pearl of the ebbing tide*, and the water separating the northeast shore of Miyashima and the offshore rock recedes, allowing the party to walk to the treasury (area 15).

Though no one else will see it, a shukenja will notice that the statue is smiling. If the pearl is pried from its mounting, the person so vandalizing the statue suffers a 10-point honor loss but will be able to lower the water separating the islands without first cleaning the shrine. The pearl can lower the waters only around Miyashima, and it is a nonmagical pearl worth 2 ch'ien anywhere else.

13. Shrine of the Lake Spirit.

The short trail ends abruptly in a small clearing bordered by iris plants that grow at the edge of the northern cliff overlooking the dark, misty waters of the lake. The remnants of a shrine face south. Though its shed has collapsed and rotted away, a 10'-high statue still stands proudly. Its features are fluid and smooth, and at its base are waves of splashing water.

If the PCs tried to cross the lake by boat, they will instantly recognize the statue as the nature spirit of the lake. A shukenja will recognize this as the statue of a nature spirit, even if the PCs avoided a watery encounter earlier. If offerings are made to the lake spirit, the PCs will not be bothered by the giant carp in area 2 or the swarm of leeches in area 5. If offerings of iris petals are made (searching the vicinity briefly will yield these), the nature spirit will not bother the party any further if they try to cross the lake. The nature spirit has not received any homage at his shrine in 250 years, and is inclined to be generous if the PCs are respectful. If the DM desires, a deep rumbling voice emanating from the statue may tell the party of the boat in area 14 and their freedom to cross the lake in it.

14. The Enchanted Cove.

After walking down a narrow set of winding stone steps, you emerge in a narrow, sandy cove about 60' in length wedged against the cliffs of the island. Gnarled, windblown trees grow from the rock walls, dropping hundreds of tiny lavender petals into the waters that gently caress the shore. Standing vertically against the cliff is a rowboat of seasoned gray wood. Across the lake you see the pale lanterns of the *mura*. You wonder how the gods could have ever abandoned an island of such beauty.

The rowboat is old but still functional, leaking only slightly. Other than the beautiful scenery, there is nothing else of interest on this narrow shore.

15. Treasury Island. If the party restored the shrine of Namikami (area 12), they will find the water level around the northeastern shore of Miyashima to have lowered 6', exposing a muddy expanse of ground stretching across to the offshore island.

This smaller island is little more than a huge chunk of jagged rock with three windblown pines growing on its peak. But when the water level drops, the outline of a doorway is exposed to the open air. This tightly sealed door is made from the rock of the island itself, with a single iron ring and a keyhole on its right side. The stone key from the shrine of Sagashi (area 11) and a combined strength of 22 pulling out on the

door will open it.

Within, carved out of the stone of the island, is a chamber 10' wide and 30' long. Stone shelves line a narrow walkway through the middle. This is the hidden treasury of Miyashima that neither Nobunaga nor Mad Gyoji could find.

Most of the shelves hold scrolls and papers: outdated land grants and the true income and expense records of Miyashima. These are of little use to anyone but the Kanchai priests who value any records of the once-great Temple of Amaterasu. There are also 16 volumes of a 20-volume *History of Kozakura*, each of which weighs 10 lbs. This set details the histories of the various provinces and noble lineages. The remaining four volumes can be found in area D10 of the tasloi village.

Of more interest to the party, though, is a store of gold and silver. There are 250 silver ingots worth 500 ch'ien total and 200 gold ingots worth 1,000 ch'ien total stored in nine wooden cases. Six scrolls are bank notes worth 6,000, 3,000, 2,800, 2,000, 1,600, and 1,200 ch'ien each. Unfortunately, these notes were insured and payment was made to the Kanchai sect soon after the island was ransacked.

The treasury also contains six magical shukenja scrolls carefully tied with silk cord and placed in individual cedar cases. The first scroll contains *exorcism* and *heal* spells. The second is a scroll of *protection from spirits*. The third scroll has *longevity* and *pacify* spells written on it. The fourth contains *bless, calm, cure light wounds, holy symbol*, and *prayer* spells. The fifth has *neutralize poison* and *remove curse* spells on it. The final scroll contains a *resurrection* spell. The stack of cedar cases conceals a bottle of valuable ink, worth 30 ch'ien, that is used for scribing magical scrolls.

The party will also find three *arrows of oni slaying* in a quiver of 20 arrows of quality. Two magical *sai of speed* lie next to a katana of quality (see *Oriental Adventures*, page 132) worth 50 ch'ien. An old 13-string koto of the style made in Shou Lung is unplayable unless it is repaired at a cost of 1-3 ch'ien. However, many court nobles would be eager to possess such a venerable, quality instrument and might pay up to 100 ch'ien for it, if it is repaired. In addition to the above items, there is a bag of pearls worth a total of 120 ch'ien. Various necklaces, bracelets and jeweled hairpins have a total value of 50 ch'ien, with the average piece worth about 2 ch'ien.

Amid all this wealth stands a golden statue about 2' tall. It is a beautifully detailed portrayal of the fox-god guardian whose shrine is at area 11. More interesting, though, is the engraving at the base of the statue: "Gyoji Sagashi." This statue proves the relationship of Mad Gyoji to this benevolent protector. This is the statue that Mad Gyoji sought as proof of his innocence, proving his lineage to the benevolent fox hengeyokai of Miyashima.

Concluding the Adventure

If the party successfully defeats Mad Gyoji and discovers a way to cure Kiyoyasu, it will take them six hours to travel the Miyashima Trail back to the *mura* (or one hour by boat across the lake, if the party has made offerings at the shrine of the lake spirit, area 13). If the PCs arrive before midnight, they will be able to cure Kiyoyasu by reading *true sight* and *exorcism* spells from scrolls found on the island, or by hanging an *ema of wishes* in the village shrine of Amaterasu. If Kiyoyasu is killed by the ikiryo but *resurrected* using a scroll found in the treasury, the ikiryo will not attack him or any of his family again.

The villagers thus become greatly indebted to the party, offering them their reward of silver ingots. The PCs may choose not to take the whole treasury of Ise-ko, especially if they have found the treasury of Miyashima. Refusing the reward earns each member of the party an additional honor point.

If the PCs discover the facts behind the murder of Fukuda and the reason for Mad Gyoji's revenge, the party's shukenja might feel that Mad Gyoji's family marker (found in area 11) should be replaced in the village shrine. Proof of Gyoji's lineage, such as the statue from the treasury (area 15) or Mad Gyoji's personal journal (from area H), may be used to convince the fishermen that this is the right action to take. Once Gyoji's family marker is restored, read the following passage aloud:

> There is a violent swirl of mist through the village. In its wake you see the mist foxes, and standing among them the misty shape of Mad Gyoji in his bipedal hengeyokai form. There is no trace of madness in his smile as he speaks to you.

> "Noblest heroes, you have restored my honor after my own attempts failed. You have broken the curse on Miyashima, and perhaps now the people of Ise-ko can bring Amaterasu to shine upon her temple once again. Know that my spirit is satisfied, and I will always protect Miyashima in time of need." The foxes fly in vaporous circles around Gyoji, obscuring him from sight. After they have faded away, Gyoji is gone too.

Each PC receives four honor points for the successful completion of the adventure, as well as eternal gratitude and prayers for good health from the village of Ise-ko. If Gyoji is pardoned and accepted back into the *mura* (by posthumously replacing his family marker), each party member receives an additional two honor points. For every two shrines briefly cleaned and restored by the shukenja, he gains an additional honor point, rounded up. These awards are in addition to the general honor awards listed in *Oriental Adventures*.

Possible future adventures around Ise-ko could be sparked by the map found in the tasloi shaman's platform, detailing an underground complex of crypts running under the lake from the treasury chamber of Miyashima. Troubles could continue from the tasloi to the south, requiring an expedition to wipe out the larger tribe from which S'kri-Ta's band originated. The old woman who advised the party to "not neglect Namikami" has a strange similarity to the statue in the shrine of Namikami, prompting the question: Is Namikami truly dead? The possibilities for further adventures abound.

Ω